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"Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon
Attitudes to and Influence on New Zealand
Relations with the United Kingdom 1880 - 1882"

by

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INTRODUCTION.

Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon entered Colonial Service in 1861. The years prior to this had given him valuable experience for this work. Born in 1829 and brought up in Scotland, he never attended school, but later took a degree from Cambridge. An attempt at securing ministerial office failed and he found it a disagreeable experience since his "proud, ambitious heart still throbbed with a strong and burning desire for power and rule". (1) This trait of character was to foster trouble in the future.

When his father to whom he was very close, became Prime Minister as Lord Aberdeen, Gordon acted as his private secretary, and after a brief period in Parliament, filled this same role for Gladstone in 1858, when he was High Commissioner of the Ionian Isles. He always remained a close personal friend to Gladstone, and

the two men corresponded privately for over forty years on all political problems and policies. They differed on the question of Colonial Self Government but "saw eye to eye on imperial expansion and the treatment of native races". Gordon never hesitated to tell Gladstone what he thought of his different appointments in the Colonial Service.

These were varied as he was appointed successively as Governor in New Brunswick (1861-66), Trinidad (1866-70), Mauritius (1870-74), Fiji (1875-1880), New Zealand (1880-1882) and Ceylon (1883-1890). In addition, he was appointed the first Western Pacific High Commissioner in 1877 and held this post until 1882. It was a position designed to be held only by the Government of Fiji, but Gordon insisted on retaining this position while Governor of New Zealand. At the same time he tried to gain plurality of power by making his New Zealand appointment conditional on his remaining Governor of Fiji as well. The idea of

a dual governorship was originally Carnarvon's(3), and after his resignation, Gordon, in 1880, exerted all the pressure he could upon Lord Kimberley, the new Secretary of State, to persuade him that this idea was feasible; having the added advantages of economy and his experience. The work in a self governing Colony would not be arduous and could easily be combined with that of Fiji without trespassing on New Zealand duties, he argued.

Gordon became less and less sure of being able to influence Kimberley to agree to this, and said of him, "he is just the sort of man not to do a thing all the more because he is asked to do it". (4) Gordon feared, with some grounds, that although he had influential friends in the Imperial Government, Kimberley, for one, had a personal dislike for Gordon and his "family politics".

His fears were realized when in August 1880 after hearing of his appointment to New Zealand, he discovered that Des Voeux was to be his successor in Fiji. Kimberley had decided not to place a larger

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(3) Secretary of State for the Colonies. 1874-8.
(4) Lord Stanmore, 'Fiji' Vol IV, p.316.
colony and Fiji together. Gordon wrote to his wife that this decision was a catastrophe to him. "I thought I had explicitly stated my desire not to be offered an Australasian Government except in conjunction with Fiji". (5) He considered Des Voeux "not at all a fit man to succeed me" (6) having "not the strength sufficient for the place either morally or physically." (7) He was mortified at being replaced by an inefficient man and feared his incomplete work would collapse.

Kimberley tried to soften the blow by telling Gordon that he was to "exercise general superintendence over Fiji native affairs" (8) and stressed the "advantages of your experience in the way of advice and general direction". (9) But this authority was unsatisfactory as far as Gordon was concerned.


(6) Ibid


(9) Ibid
"If it means a general supervision and control over Fiji, it is all I want. If it means only some vague right to criticize and comment on what is done in native affairs alone, it is wholly useless". (10)

How could native affairs be separated from other Fijians affairs? It would only lead to jealousies and disputes, enhanced by such ambiguous instructions. The Colonial Office offering him New Zealand without Fiji after all he had said and written was a bitter disappointment of his hopes. "My only opportunity of making a real mark in the world ...... and leaving a name behind me has passed away". (11) He felt that all the work he had done in Fiji, especially with regards to native affairs, would disintegrate.

What caused more bitterness was a personal feud with Des Voeux, who in a press interview, had stated that Arthur Gordon could "only give advice" as High Commissioner while he, Des Voeux, was in full control in Fiji. Gordon was never reconciled to this co-ordinate authority with Des Voeux. "Advice is

not control"(12) he said, and insisted on an annual visit to Fiji, retention of control over the Land Appeals Court and Native Council as president, and the approval of the Estimates.

Even this "substantial authority" granted to him coupled with the High Commissionership could not erase the feeling of frustration. Such a background of dissatisfaction, resentment and blighted hopes was hardly conducive to a whole-hearted enthusiasm and ready acceptance of his new appointment to New Zealand. It boded ill for himself and the New Zealand Government in the eighteen months ahead.

(12) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Des Voeux, 11 Dec. 1880.
1. **APPOINTMENT TO NEW ZEALAND.**

Gordon was extremely annoyed at being "promoted" to New Zealand. He had wanted a field of larger responsibility if anything, and now was given one in which he had virtually no responsibility at all. "The post of a Governor of a Constitutional Colony is distasteful to me", he wrote. The duties there are "altogether formal and mechanical. They make no demand whatever on his (the Governor's) thoughts, and but little on his time - not occupying perhaps two or three hours a week". (1)

He considered himself illfitted for such a position, his abilities being of an administrative nature. These would have no scope in New Zealand, and he was not the sort of man to enjoy social duties, while as for "laying stones ...... making little speeches ........ entertaining large parties of stupid people .......... I neither like it nor can do it well". (2) He declared that he should hate

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(1) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Selbourne Dec 1880.

(2) Ibid
life in New Zealand, with no power, no real work, and continual 'society' of a "dreary colonial type",(3) to keep him from doing better things.

Gordon tried to stress upon Gladstone how much the position of a Constitutional Governor had changed in the previous twenty years. The jealousies of the Legislative and successive Ministries had deprived the Governor not only of all influence in public affairs, but even to a great extent, of the means of obtaining any knowledge of them. (4) He summed up his feelings in a letter to Lord Selbourne. "It is not without a sense of degradation that I find myself highly paid, well housed and well fed, for performing the functions of a stamp." (5) To his wife he referred to himself as a "puppet ....... a leaden seal ......... a mere instrument of his Ministers". (6) For someone of his autocratic


(4) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Gladstone, 27 Dec 1880.


temperament such a position could only be a "hated promotion". Rather pettishly he considered "Wellington .......... a detestable place .......... always blowing a hurricane .......... Now, I hate wind above all things."(7)

Herbert (8) tried to reassure him by saying that he would find Responsible Government a far easier matter than he supposed, and called New Zealand "our most interesting and promising colony". (9) But Gordon was never convinced, and having lost the Governorship of Fiji expressed the wish to go home to England, to his books and 'pleasant society'. He wrote to Grey in New Zealand saying he would have gone home but for the feeling that he ought not to throw up the control over Fiji still left to him. (10)

(8) Permanent Undersecretary at the Colonial Office. 1871-1892.
(10) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Grey, 27 Nov. 1880.
Sadly he left Fiji for New Zealand on 16 November 1880. "I was leaving half my heart behind in the land over which for more than five years I had been the absolute despot". (11) Gordon hoped that things would be quiet in New Zealand so that he could spend as much time as possible on his beloved Fiji. This hope was doomed to disappointment and the eighteen months spent in New Zealand were months of "constant frustration and restlessness". (12) Conflicts with his Ministers coupled with severe native problems dogged his footsteps, and his temperament, more suited to a position of power, could only regale at the restrictions placed on him and the "uselessness" of his position.

The powers of a Constitutional Governor had deteriorated even since Gordon was Governor of New Brunswick, and he found increasingly that his Ministers acted first and then later advised him to approve their


(12) Chapman, p. 234.
action. No longer was he invited to attend Cabinet meetings and was largely uninformed about its proceedings. His only contact with Ministers was through the Premier, (13) and he had no way of consulting them privately. Innocent attempts to do so in the Parihaka affair and later when Hall resigned, engendered much criticism and ill-feelings. Frequently he only found out of Parliamentary happenings via the newspapers, and this caused intense irritation and embarrassment, as did friction with his Ministers centred on the question of confidential despatches to the Colonial Office. At every turn Gordon found his wings clipped and powers impaired. Lady Gordon writing to her sister said, "He was never meant to be a Constitutional Governor....... He is miserable .... the sooner we get away the better." (14)

2. EARLY MONTHS.

Gordon was sworn in as Governor on 29 November 1880. His arrival in Wellington had been uneventful and quiet, partly because of the rain, partly because the date of arrival had been changed. On the wharf presentations of greetings from the Hibernian Society and the Oddfellows typified the sort of colonial conventiality he detested. Papers throughout New Zealand commented on the new Governor with only moderate interest. "We have got a good Governor with a strong sense of duty", (1) said the New Zealand Herald, while the Lyttelton Times struck an interesting note by remarking that "Theatres, balls and horse-racing Sir Arthur is said to view with disfavour." (2)

In some respects New Zealanders were not sure just what sort of Governor they had been given. Reports from Fiji filled some with concern, but Gordon made every effort to reassure the public.

(1) New Zealand Herald, 2 Dec. 1880.
(2) Lyttelton Times, 4 Dec. 1880.
and the Colonial Office(3) that he knew how to act as a Constitutional Governor. His tour of the South Island early in 1881 was studded with such protestations. In Dunedin he declared that the whole duty of a Constitutional Governor was "to oil the machinery of Government and keep it going easily".(4) Most papers showed a wariness despite Gordon's efforts. The Otago Daily Times told the public that Sir Arthur Gordon "has been an autocrat. Yet it is not to suppose that His Excellency will be less mindful of his more delicate duties in the Colony where he has to suppress himself, and where all his actions should be guided by the advice of his responsible ministers",(5) while the New Zealand Herald warned; "Sir Arthur

(3) Colonial Office 209/240., Gordon to Kimberley, 26 March 1881., Gordon sent copious newspaper reports of his tour (in 1881) and speeches to the Colonial Office, no doubt to assure them too that he knew how to keep within constitutional bounds.

(4) Otago Daily Times, 19 March 1881.

(5) Otago Daily Times, 15 March 1881.
Gordon will find the task of being neutral between political parties by no means an easy one ........

[here] there is an encouragement to intrigue ........ and it is more easy for disguised influences to work on the Governor".(6) One wonders if they were not quietly reminding Gordon of his duties, while ostensibly informing the public of the same!

When the Governor opened the first Session of Parliament in early June 1881, so far as the public was concerned his speech allayed further fears. It was the "unqualified announcement by the Governor of his acceptance without reserve of the position of the constitutional ruler ........ the language of an honest gentleman".(7) The House of Representatives itself was less conciliatory and resented Gordon patronizingly writing to the Colonial Office that the welcome given him by his Ministers had been "cordial and respectful". Gordon refused to withdraw the word 'respectful' on the grounds that Her Majesty would think the welcome had not been respectful if he did. The House retaliated by removing the

(6) New Zealand Herald, 21 March 1881
(7) New Zealand Herald, 10 June 1881.
sentence from the speech altogether. Typically, Gordon let the Colonial Office know how he felt about this, but only received a mild rebuke in return.

A clash with his Ministers occurred in January 1881; not serious but indicative of future troubles. A death sentence passed upon Wiremu Wharepa was commuted to life imprisonment by the Governor in opposition to the majority of his Executive Council. (8) His reason for this cut across Justice Johnston's ruling, and aroused that gentleman to angry retort. Gordon pacified the judge but clung to his power of prerogative of pardon. The Colonial Office although commenting that Gordon should have informed them, backed him up, (one of the few times it did) by saying "Sir Arthur Gordon has not ....... overstepped the liberty allowed to him by his instructions ............. Ministers advice does not necessarily prevail in questions connected with the prerogative of pardon". (9) In some

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(8) In fact only two members of the assembled Executive Council voted for execution, although others telegraphed that they wanted execution. Gordon considered however, that they would have been persuaded to change their minds if they had taken part in discussion on the matter.

ways it appeared as if Gordon, in the face of so much loss of power, was determined to use those powers that still remained to him. The old habits from Fiji died hard.

With equal passion for detail Gordon became involved in the question of altering the Constitution of the Legislative Council. It is doubtful if the issue warranted his close analysis, but typically, Gordon, entering into every aspect of political life, expressed concern that the Bill purporting to alter the Constitution, went beyond the title and was aimed to alter the Council's powers and procedures as well. In addition the Bill meant for the Legislative Council only, actually affected the House of Representatives too. Gordon said he found "a decided tendency towards relaxation of that most useful rule which limits Legislative enactment to one subject". (10) and opened the path to "dextrous manipulation". He discussed and offered advice on each clause of the Bill,

especially clause 43 where he suggested that the Governor be allowed to appoint any member of the Executive Council to the Legislative Council. In this way the Government could avail itself of the valuable services of men outside ordinary paths of political life.

The New Zealand Government seems to have accepted many of Gordon's suggestions and the Colonial Office too, supported him but Kimberley refrained from any comment more than, "I have perused these papers with much interest". (11) The Colonial Office continued this policy of strict non-intervention throughout Gordon's time in New Zealand.

These were the last weeks of comparative harmony between the Colonial Office, the Governor and his Ministers, before the developments in native affairs at Parihaka burst on the political scene and shattered that harmony beyond repair.

(11) Colonial Office 309/240, Gordon to Kimberley, 20 May 1881. 26 July 1881
In all the months Gordon was in New Zealand, nothing assumed more importance in Native Affairs than the complex Parihaka affair, and nothing caused more trouble between Gordon and the Colonial Office. The history of Parihaka and the West Coast Native Affairs comprised a series of blundering steps by the New Zealand Government to assert its power over the Maori, and especially over his land. From 1877 the combined pressure of settlers' land hunger and Government revenue needs caused the Government to repeal the pre-emptive clause of the Treaty of Waitangi so that settlers could purchase land direct from the Maoris. In this way a block of land between the Waingongoro and Stoney Rivers, confiscated from the Maoris during the Maori Wars, was opened up for settlement, without the Government granting native reserves to the loyal Maoris as promised. Surveyors were sent on to the block and roads were put through without regard to cultivated areas.
Parihaka, a small village near New Plymouth, became the centre of passive resistance to the Government's action. This resistance was focussed on, and led by, a Maori chief, a self-styled prophet, called Te Whiti. Maoris from surrounding districts flocked to Parihaka to hear his monthly speeches and join in the resistance. Barracks were built to accommodate the increasing numbers. The chief instructed his men to erect fences across the new roads, supposedly to stop stock straying, and organized ploughing teams on the pasture lands bought by Europeans. In this way he hoped to force Government legal action as regards the land promised to him.

The Government retaliated by passing the Maori Prisoners Trial Bill (1879) which meant that ploughers and fencers could be arrested and held in prison without immediate trial. By this Act 170 maoris were arrested in 1879, virtually the entire male population of Parihaka. In the same year the Grey Government fell, and Hall, taking over the Ministry, began to pursue a two-sided policy. On the one hand
he appointed Sir William Fox and Sir Francis Dillon Bell to organize a West Coast Commission to define native grievances and recommend solutions,\(^1\) while on the other hand, further penal acts\(^2\) were passed, and John Bryce, his Native Minister, who according to A. Saunders was "singularly unfit by intellect, by temperament and by surrounding influences, for the kind of work now so clearly demanded from him"\(^3\) constantly advocated a policy of stern measures against the Parihaka "insurgents", and continued the arrests. Such duality of purpose was bound to aggravate trouble.

In March and August 1880, the Commissioners presented three reports, which stated that the Maoris had real grievances and all grants and promises made by

\(^{1}\) Although a Maori representative was appointed to the Commission he never took part in its proceedings. This was unfortunate for it led to cries of "White domination", and meant that the Maori point of view could not be fairly represented.

\(^{2}\) In 1880 the Maori Prisoners Bill and the Maori Prisoners Detention Bill suspended habeas corpus for Maori Prisoners. These were a denial of justice and unfair and unwarranted measures. Even the Colonial Office disapproved, although it did not oppose the measures openly.

the Government to them should be honoured. They advocate a land grant of 25,000 acres as compensation to be made to two chiefs, while the remainder of the land was to be left for the Government. These recommendations were never put into effect and Te Whitie continuing his ploughing and fencing refused to give up the land. The New Zealand Government also continued to imprison the resisting Maoris until in desperation Te Whitie petitioned the Imperial Government for the release of the prisoners. This finally moved the Colonial Office to action and Gordon was instructed to report on the whole situation. From this point, serious trouble with his Ministers began.

Gordon had had an autocratic control over native affairs in Fiji, and as it had been his chief interest it was natural to suppose that he would take an equally active interest in the same field in New Zealand. Before coming to the Colony, however, he was reluctant to face the Maori issue and used it as one of his reasons for not wanting to accept the appointment. He feared that before long his Ministers would advise him to take "unnecessary and unjust steps", which would lead to another war. He declared he would rather resign than give even nominal
approval to such measures. The thought of resigning was with him from the moment he received his New Zealand appointment, although he did not want to embarrass Kimberley by resigning on the grounds of Native Affairs alone. He told Kimberley that it would be "better to avoid such a contingency by letting me return to Fiji". (4) It was a wish that never came true.

When Her Majesty’s request came for Gordon to investigate the Parihaka question however, he decided, in typical manner, to do it properly. Amidst the boredom of a Constitutional Governors life, here was something worthwhile to work at. It is doubtful if the Colonial Office wanted more than a "perfunctory report". "It is hoped that Sir Arthur Gordon will be careful in forming any opinion upon these questions [but follow] the advice of Ministers whose experience is so much greater, and who are responsible for the result." (5) They

(4) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Kimberley, 2 Jan. 1881.
should have known Gordon better than to give him a job they didn't want carried out to the last full-stop.

In some ways he "acted like a Royal Commission sent out to investigate alleged abuses in a Crown Colony", (6) and in December 1880 appointed Fox to inquire into all land claims and survey native reserves. In addition he sent his Aide-de-Camp, Knollys, to talk with Te Whiti and arranged a meeting with the Governor. In a letter to Te Whiti he said confidently, "I have lately ruled over a people very like the Maoris. I have left them happy and contented, discussing their own affairs". (7)

This confidence was shaken when Te Whiti treated Knollys rudely. Saying "black and white will never agree" and "a cooked potato cannot talk" (8) he refused

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(7) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand. 1881, A-1, p.22.

to even listen to the Governor's letter. A second attempt likewise failed. Although Gordon had been 'advised' by his Ministers as to this course of action it is not likely that either Hall or Bryce really wanted this meeting. The Governor's failure no doubt gave them a good deal of satisfaction for they were very wary of this "Maori-loving Governor". The press reiterated this wariness with greater force. It is an "unfelicitous step to have thus early mixed up with the native question a gentleman whose supposed proclivity for exalting the coloured man at the expense of the white, and whose office of High Commissioner and autocratic power as Governor of Fiji, have been the cause of anticipations of the intrusion of his personal will and opinion on the affairs of this colony and notably with regard to the native race". (9) The New Zealand Herald was strongly opposed to the Governor's interference in Native Affairs and fear it would bring on a collision of opinion in the House. In this way the Governor rather than being neutral, would be a supporter of which ever Ministry supported his policies. "The Colonial Office's representative rules but does not Govern," (10) warned the paper.

(9) New Zealand Herald., 27 Dec. 1880.
(10) Ibid
The Herald considered that the proud rebuff by Te Whiti to the Governor's advances only strengthened his position in the eyes of his supporters and additionally, the Governor's advances would eclipse the Government and diminish respect for the Ministry in the eyes of the natives. "It was a grave error to bring the Governor prominently into the public eye .... we trust we shall hear no more of the Governor in connection with Native Affairs." But the country was to hear a lot more about Gordon with regards Native Affairs before the situation at Parihaka improved.

In late January Bryce resigned from the Cabinet when his wish for a "short, sharp and decisive" policy towards Te Whiti was not endorsed by all his colleagues. Everything would have settled down under the new pro-Maori Minister for Native Affairs - Rolleston, had not Gordon expressed his opinion

(11) New Zealand Herald, 17 Jan, 1881.

(12) Gisborne in his 'New Zealand Rulers and Statesmen' 1840-1897, p.210 says of Rolleston. He was "intelligent ....... and earnest (but) lacking decision of character and definiteness of purpose."
in reporting the resignation, to the Colonial Office. He stated that Bryce's policy had only narrowly escaped acceptance in the Cabinet and many of the members, including the Premier, were advocates of a strong approach to Te Whiti. Their refusal to act on Bryce's demands, he continued, centred on the question of time rather than an outright rejection of his wishes. This was hardly a fair conclusion, as Hall at this stage, had given no indication that he was eager for a "showdown" with the Maori chief. It angered the Premier and meant that in future he refrained from consulting the Governor on many points where the latter's experience would have been helpful. The Governor had forfeited Hall's confidence.

With the Governor and Premier in opposition a clash was almost inevitable. Even the Colonial Office thought that "Sir Arthur Gordon has insisted too far against the policy of his Ministers."(13) Bryce too was angry with the Governor because he had enclosed a newspaper report to the Colonial

Office, as a summary of the reasons for his resignation and had written that but for Te Whiti's opposition to the progress of settlement his conduct in other respects would have been less unfavourably considered. Bryce declared he had suffered "treatment such as he ought not to have been subjected to (14) on the part of the Governor. In Parliament, Ballance said that Bryce had cause for complaint, for the Premier was responsible for the Governor's despatches and should not have allowed criticism of Bryce to go to the Colonial Office. Hall, in reply, laid the blame entirely on the Governor, whom, he said, was responsible only to the Secretary of State. Governor's despatches, he declared, were nothing to do with him. (15) In a few weeks the question of despatches became very much a matter to do with the Premier.

The impending clash came when Gordon's report of the 26 February 1881 on West Coast Native

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(14) Governor General. Entry Book of Memoranda for Ministers, G35/2, quoted. 13 June 1882.

Affairs reached the Colonial Office in May 1881. The report deplored the muddled policies of the Government and said that although the arrests were justifiable, the form of enactment was objectionable. The Maori Prisoners Act detained Maoris without trial for long periods; a measure without precedent, while two years imprisonment for 'suspected' opposition or "an intention to commit" opposition was hardly just. On the whole Gordon sided with the Maoris, whom he said, were "substantially in the right". Land had been confiscated from loyal Maoris against Government promises and reserves should have been made before the surveys. He criticized the Government for putting roads through cultivated areas and said that fences should have been erected alongside the roads. Gordon praised Te Whiti, who far from causing "disturbances" was showing "quiet persistence in the assertion of rights of occupation". (16)

The Hall ministry resented Gordon's criticisms and his failure for two months to show

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Ministers the despatches containing his opinions. Hall protested that convention had been broken, for despatches should first have been read and approved by Ministers before going to the Colonial Office, and only published in the Colony on the advice of Ministers.

Although the essence of the conflict was not made public at this stage and the report itself not published, the New Zealand Herald gained some inkling of the differences existing between Gordon and his ministers with regards to despatches and commented "The colony has a right to be jealous of secret (17) despatches ....... It must not be forgotten that the Governor has no responsibility to the Colony over which he presides and by means of private despatches can do it an infinity of harm at the Colonial Office, without its having any knowledge of what is proceeding." (18) The editor pointed out that a strong Governor could manipulate

(17) The use of 'secret' here is in its general sense and does not carry the technical meaning of 'secret despatch'.

(18) New Zealand Herald, 14 June 1881.
a weak Premier under such circumstances and expressed the fear held by many in the Colony, that such correspondence could increase the interference of Her Majesty's Government in Colonial affairs. The Premier himself should be able to correspond with the Colonial Office direct.

With something akin to a childish jealousy of rights the New Zealand Herald said "if the Connection of the colony with the Empire is to be preserved it can be accomplished by no other means than by the Colonial Office leaving them to manage their own affairs, and he is the best friend of that connection who nips in the bud the first attempt of the Colonial Office to meddle". (19) This is some ways was an unjustifiable criticism, for the Colonial Office was being most careful to keep out of colonial internal affairs.

With regards to the despatch itself Hall took more offence than just that of broken conventions.

(19) New Zealand Herald, 2 June 1881.
He accused Gordon of deliberately misrepresenting the situation to the Secretary of State and drawing erroneous deductions in fact. He said that the arrests had been necessary to avert war and stop Te Whiti taking all the land. He objected strongly to the idea that the Maoris were "substantially in the right". (20) In forwarding this memo to the Colonial Office Gordon said that its tone was "feeble and querulous", (21) and showed the difference between one actively concerned and an onlooker. He said that Hall was breaking down arguments of his own making and in reply to the Premier said that his report would in reality be very little affected by any criticism the Ministers might raise. There were a few trifling errors of detail he admitted, but in no "material particular" would it convey a wrong impression. He had only discharged the duty imposed by Her Majesty's Government, and said that "His Excellency has not sought..."
to obtrude his views upon the notice of others .......
and sees no reason ........ to alter or modify the
conclusions at which he has previously arrived". (22)
He further stated that he wished to abstain from all
controversy with Ministers, (23) and did not think it
a matter for surprise that they did not agree on all
points.

With an election pending, Hall feared a loss of
support if the despatch and related correspondence
became public. He urgently requested the Secretary
of State not to lay the despatch before the House of
Commons "without opportunity being afforded to
ministers of being heard with respect to such intended
action." (24) The Colonial Office complied with this

(22) Appendices to the Journals of the House of
Representatives of New Zealand 1882, A-8,
pp. 15-16, Gordon to Hall, 12 July 1881.

(23) One such incident of controversy and friction
between Gordon and his Ministers was when Gordon
asked Pannis, former assistant Native Secretary,
to comment on the 26th Feb. despatch. Pannis
reported this secretly to Rolleston who was
annoyed with Gordon for working behind his back. Gordon
apologized to the Native Minister and rebuked Pannis for acting in this underhand way and for supposing that the Governor would keep secrets from his Ministers. "I think I have cause for serious displeasure". Stanmore Correspondence Government to Pannis 22 June 1881.

(24) Cabinet Minute Book 1879-1882, p.232, 9 July
1881.
request and agreed that it would be "very undesirable to present these papers if it can be avoided". (25) With the excuse that such publication would "imperiously interfere with the settlement of any existing difficulties with the Maoris", (26) Hall recommended the Governor not to lay his despatch before Parliament either.

The Colonial Office had been on guard for trouble. "It has been anticipated that he (Gordon) would not be long in New Zealand without forming and expressing views on native questions opposed to those of the Legislative and of the people generally," (27) and when the conflict was openly brought to their notice they took Hall's part against Gordon. There was a certain animosity towards Sir Arthur in the Colonial Office. This was partly a result of his somewhat overweening manner and partly because Kimberley did not sympathize with his "politics". Any criticism the Office made, however, was generally


(26) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1882, A-8, p 16, Hall to Governor, 13 July 1881.

restrained because of Gordon's friendship with Gladstone. In later crises the Secretary of State and Under Secretaries became more outspoken.

After the despatch crisis had subsided more trouble loomed. With an election ahead Hall needed to satisfy the desires of land-hungry settlers, and in September more of Te Whiti's land was confiscated and sold in a few days. Te Whiti made no attempt to resist the theft of his land and Gordon wrote again to the Secretary of State (28) in apprehension at the result of this policy. Again he met with little support from the Colonial Office. Kimberley called it "a purely colonial question", and said, "we have long established the policy of not attempting any interference with the New Zealand Government, whose jealousy of the least interference is extreme. Hitherto they have managed the native question with singular prudence and success". (29)

By shielding the New Zealand Government in this way and showing an utter lack of sympathy to Maori claims, the Colonial Office "completely abdicated" (30) the Crown's responsibility for native lands.

Gordon's was, in many ways, a lone voice raised in protest. It made his position untenable both with the Colonial Office and with the New Zealand Government and says much for his moral character that instead of acquiescing in favour of the majority he constantly acted as an irritant to Government conscience by speaking out against the course of events.

Gordon was particularly anxious about the situation, for he was intending to go to Fiji for six weeks to fulfil his functions as High Commissioner. He had supposed that the session of Parliament would have finished before he left in early September, but unexpectedly it was prolonged, an event that increased his fears and, no doubt, his suspicions. The

Governor wrote to Hall as to whether he should depart as planned and received a reply that "no serious public inconvenience will result from His Excellency's departure". (31) The public were not so accommodating. The _Lyttelton Times_ queried whether a Governor should have left before prorogation and further demanded "Is the arrangement of making an Australasian Governor do the duty as the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, just and fair to the colony which he governs?" (32) In addition, the situation was hardly fair financially, said the paper, although a larger colony should be able to take a larger view of this matter. More important was the matter of replacement, which was done at the expense of the Administration of Justice. The Colony can afford to help the Imperial Government out of a difficulty, but the Colony can not do it at the expense of the Supreme Court." (33)


(33) Ibid
The New Zealand Herald echoed this point of view and questioned the dual Commission. It did not consider New Zealand was being fairly or courteously treated when the nominated Governor left to discharge another office over which they had no control. (34) In the House there was talk of reducing the Governor's salary while Pyke (Dunstan) expressed the feeling of many. "I do not know whether New Zealand has become an appendage (sic) of Fiji; or Fiji an appendage (sic) of New Zealand." (35)

More serious was the question raised by Gisborne, (Totara) as to whether the Governor, after having left the Colony and the Chief Justice having been sworn in as Administrator, could resume his commission on his return. (36) Mr. Macandrew (Port Chalmers) "with more truth than politeness" (37) thought that it didn't matter where the nominal Governor was as long as the true Government, the Ministry, remained in New Zealand.

(34) New Zealand Herald, 10 Sept. 1881.
(36) Ibid
(37) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1882, A-4, p.2., Gordon to Kimberley, 13 Sept. 1881.
It is curious that such a question was raised, especially when so many Australian Governors were absent from their Colonies for six weeks or more. In the light of what was to take place with regards Parihaka, one would almost suspect an ulterior motive for the query. The Imperial Government settled the question by telegraphing that the Temporary Administrator's Commission ceased with the return of the Governor.

Gordon, in writing of the reactions to his departure on September 9th, concluded by saying "it is well understood how purely perfunctory the duties of the Governor really are". (38) A comment such as this only set the Colonial Office against Gordon more than ever. Herbert said, "the duties of a Governor where there is Responsible Government are apparently altogether distasteful to Sir Arthur Gordon but they exist nevertheless and are anything but perfunctory,"(39) and Kimberley thought it "singular that a man of Sir Arthur Gordon's ability should be wholly unable apparently to understand the positions and functions.

(38) Colonial Office 209/240., Gordon to Kimberley, 13 Sept. 1881.

of a Governor in a Constitutional Colony. He probably supposes that the duties of the sovereign of this country ...... are equally perfunctory". (40)

In this way Gordon, increasingly alienated from the Colonial Office and the New Zealand Government, was completely unable to influence or direct events leading to the crisis at Parihaka. There has been much speculation as to what actually happened in the next few weeks but it seems that with the pliable Prendegast (41) in the absent Gordon's place, the New Zealand Government decided to act, and resolve the Parihaka business once and for all. The imminent General Election was an important influence, for both Bryce and Atkinson came from the West Coast and if the Maori trouble could be cleared up both would gain increased support.

The Government had made limited offers of land to Te Whiti while continuing to sell the bulk of his land. The Chief refusing this sop had continued passive resistance. A visit from Rolleston produced little


(41) Chief Justice who replaced Gordon as Administrator.
result and two days after Gordon left, the Government increased the Constabulary and armed the settlers of the district near Parihaka. Six days later an extra £100,000 was secured from the Government. The newspapers adopted a more belligerent tone. "Is nothing to be done with Parihaka - that hotbed of scares" (42) asked the New Zealand Herald. The majority press approved of the fact that the Government was at last to "put its foot down". (43) The whole affair had become expensive and dangerous and it would be a great victory to the Government if they could force a final solution. Government leniency had been carried almost to the point of weakness, declared the Otago Daily Times, and Only the Lyttelton Times lashed out at the folly of Government policy, which, they prophesied, would lead to war. It's methods had been too "uncompromising and too rough ......... Instead of making that method rougher, with gunpowder

(42) New Zealand Herald, 1 Oct. 1881.
we should make it smoother with policy." (44) In sympathizing with the Maori the paper said that for fifteen years the Government had not fulfilled promises, and pursued a cruel and treacherous path. "So long as the European settlement is pushed on while the Crown Grants for the Natives are kept back .......... so long will the natives be suspicious obstructive, perhaps warlike". (45)

When Gordon in Fiji, heard of the turn of events from his Private Secretary (46) he returned

(44) Lyttelton Times, 10 Oct. 1881.

(45) Ibid

(46) Although Hall had said he would telegraph Sir Arthur if any serious inconvenience arose (cf. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates Vol 40 p.489) the Governor later complained that he had only gained news from his Private Secretary and the New Zealand newspapers. Not a single Minister had written to him, Whitaker claimed that it would have been improper to correspond with an absent Governor, and Hall feebly stated that they did not have Gordon's address! One wonders how Gordon's Private Secretary was able to come by this elusive address!
to New Zealand with all speed. The night before he was due to land at Wellington an Executive Council meeting reappointed Bryce as Native Minister and issued a Proclamation which was despatched to Parihaka at 4 a.m. the following morning on the grounds that Te Whiti had used threatening language in one of his speeches and incited his followers to aggression. The Proclamation stated that Te Whiti's constant rejection of Government advances, coupled with the fact that he was keeping many people from the land offered to them, now meant that if he did not accept the Government reserves, and submit to the Queen by dispersing from Parihaka in 14 days, he would be taken prisoner, roads would be made through the Parihaka block and all the land sold for European occupation. "The Queen and the law must be supreme at Parihaka and elsewhere". (47)

When Gordon landed next morning he was rightly furious at what had taken place. Whether

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the Government deliberately rushed ahead knowing Gordon was due to return can not be proved conclusively, but the timing of events is suspicious. The Governor demanded a full report as to why "immediate action was so imperative" (48) especially when they knew he would be reluctant to comply with such a policy. Hall lamely replied that the Government did not know Gordon was due back and had not thought he would disagree with their actions. In the light of what the Governor had always said this was hardly convincing. The Governor's suspicions could only have been increased when Hall said "Whether under the circumstances the action of the Executive was unusual, Ministers will not argue" (49).

Altogether Gordon was in one of the most difficult situations of his career and would rather have resigned than accept responsibility for the war he was convinced would eventuate. He telegraphed to Kimberley asking whether he was responsible for acts


passed, only when he stepped ashore, or did this responsibility begin when he entered territorial waters? Eventually it was established that the Administrator's Acts were valid until the Governor actually resumed office, and the Governor was not responsible for acts done in his absence. In some quarters the Governor's query as to whether the Proclamation was legal was misconstrued to mean that he was trying in some way to oppose Government actions. The *New Zealand Herald* called it a petty device and said "the Government cannot tolerate such high-handed interference with its prerogatives .... cannot consent to Government by the Governor." (50) It predicted shipwreck for the Governor if he proved obstinate and feared his actions would encourage the resistance at Parihaka. "In Sir Arthur Gordon we have a capable but a very self opinionated Governor". (51) The *Otago Daily Times* agreed with this. "There is some cause for apprehension lest the

(51) New Zealand Herald, 9 Nov. 1881.
supposed philo-aboriginal tendencies of Sir Arthur should lead him to interfere more than is desirable in the present dispute." (52)

Only the Lyttelton Times supported the Governor. "His first appearance in the Colony produced the only gleam of good sense we have had in the Native question". (53) It thought the Government had acted disloyally behind the Governor's back by not waiting till he returned, and said a "dirty trick" had been played on the Governor; the Government had violated its duty to him.

Gordon was powerless to control events at Parihaka and although he declared the Proclamation "injudicious ...... disputable ...... and inequitable", (54) he had to give formal consent to a policy he thought morally wrong. He told the Colonial Office that he considered it his duty to acquiesce in the course initiated by his Ministers but personally was very

(54) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1883, A-4, p.8., Gordon to Hall, 3 Nov. 1881.
opposed. The Colonial Office did not support his attitude. "The Ministry knew what they were about better than Sir Arthur Gordon," (55) said Bramston, and the Colonial Office shrugged off all responsibility by saying "fortunately we are not bound to express an opinion on the conduct of the New Zealand Government." (56) They seemed more concerned that Gordon had not concluded his work in Fiji satisfactorily and only incurred a heavy bill.

At Parihaka Te Whiti ignored the Proclamation and on the 5 November a force of 17,000 constabulary and troops led by Bryce marched into the village, read the Riot Act and arrested Te Whiti and Tohu (his supporter) on the charge of using seditious language. Although they met with no resistance, only children carrying gifts of bread, the troops began to break up the village and ordering those assembled back to their own villages. 1,500 men, women and children were arrested in the next few days and all the district within 60 miles deprived of firearms. (57) Crops were

(57) To take firearms in this manner was quite illegal.
damaged and barracks taken down. The whole affair bristled with illegalities and injustices. The Government declared that Te Whiti would not accept the "generous" reserves made to him although the Chief maintained that these had never been pointed out to him. The Maoris hoped Te Whiti would be able to raise in the Supreme Court the question of the validity of the exclusion of the Maori from the lands granted to them, and Rolleston claimed that they were expecting Imperial assistance.

After Te Whiti and Tohu had spent six months in prison a Court ruled their arrest illegal, but the Government was afraid to let the men go. This placed the Hall Government in a legally untenable position so a Special Act, the West Coast Prisoners Bill (1882), was passed to keep the men in prison. Gordon sent a blistering commentary to the House saying that there was no evidence of the prisoners guilt and the legislation to keep them in prison was unfair and constitutionally unprecedented. The Colonial Office, glad that events had settled down satisfactorily took the line of least resistance and said nothing.
In two long despatches (Dec 3 and 28) Gordon criticized the Government and said the whole affair had been disgracefully unjust and only the forebearance of Te Whiti had prevented war, to which Atkinson retaliated by saying that the Governor, sending hostile despatches, was working against Ministers and endeavouring to bring about their downfall. This was so absurd as not to draw comment from the Colonial Office, but the Ministers' reactions to Gordon's despatches bespoke an uneasy conscience, and at Hall's request they were not laid before Parliament.

Parihaka had placed Gordon in an unenviable predicament, yet throughout he had conducted himself with dignity. Taking sides against his Ministers as openly as he did may not have been entirely constitutional, but it is to his moral credit that he did not let his official position compromise his personal disapproval. To see a work, so dear to his heart, carried out with injustice and greed made him finally resolve to leave New Zealand as soon as possible. The remaining six months were as unhappy and full of conflict with his Ministers, as the preceding year had been.
During the months of friction over Parihaka Gordon had contemplated resigning on numerous occasions. At one stage Kimberley offered him the Governorship of Jamaica to replace New Zealand, but he declined this on the ground that Jamaica was not such an important colony as New Zealand, and also if he went there he would no longer have any control over his beloved Fiji. He said that Ceylon and Cyprus were the only Governorships which would tempt him to forego his intention to return home, although at one stage he said "What I really want is the Government of an Indian Presidency but that is hardly a 'colonial' appointment" (1) Gordon was completely unable to delude himself as to his own importance in New Zealand. In addition he had no "taste for society such as Wellington affords" (2) and could not enjoy the social pursuits his predecessors used to help pass the time, such as card playing, shooting or other sports fashionable at the time. He felt morally responsible

(1) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Kimberley, 9 July 1881.

(2) Ibid
for conducting the affairs of his Governorship with close diligence, a stance that only brought him into more and more disharmony with his responsible advisors and the Colonial office.

This was the case when Hall asked Gordon in November 1881 to dissolve Parliament. As Constitutional Governor, Gordon agreed to this but queried the wisdom of such a step, both to Hall and to the Secretary of State, especially when he was asked to prorogue the meeting of the General Assembly from the 22 December 1881 to 13 February 1882. He stated three reasons why an early assembling would be preferable. Firstly, he could only accept the advice of Ministers having the confidence of House and country, and the existing administration could not show that it had the absolute majority of the House of Representatives until the next session. Secondly, the Government had taken measures of great importance since the last session that could cause trouble in the Colony, and Parliament should be assembled quickly to judge these transactions. Thirdly, an act of Indemnity might be required for some of these
measures. Constitutional propriety dictated that "no time should be lost in seeking such indemnity". (3)

While stressing an early Assembling of Parliament, Gordon did admit to the Colonial Office that the Ministers are "for the most part a better and abler set of men than any by whom they could be replaced." (4) Any change would be a change for the worse. (5) The Colonial Office however, took a dim view of Gordon's demands and thought his lecture to his ministers rather uncalled for. "He might have been at any rate less oracular as to their misfeasances if he meant them to pay any attention to him." (6) Kimberley would not support Gordon, and considered it was not in the Governor's power to require them to call Parliament together. "Where then is the use of his lecture? It is for his Ministers to judge what advice they will give him on this and other points." (7)

(5) Ibid,
(6) In a later despatch he stated that the new Parliament did show a diminution in the members of good social status. 20 Jan. 1882.
(7) Ibid, Kimberley, Minute, 2 March 1882.
Over the matter of Sir Henry Parkes' mission to the United States however, the Colonial Office took a more sympathetic attitude. This was partly because the Imperial Government's interests were more directly involved and partly because Sir Arthur was treated with "scant courtesy to say the least of it". (8) In December 1881 the New Zealand Government authorized Sir Henry Parkes, in a visit to America, to seek certain subsidies on the San Francisco mail service and a reduction on the Import duties for Wool. Gordon's sense of propriety was outraged to learn about this mission from the newspaper and asked Atkinson (Hall was away) why relations with a Foreign Government had not been mentioned to him. Atkinson said that it was an oversight, but a telegram from Hall contradicted this, "My omission to speak to the Governor about Sir Henry Parkes was not an oversight. No action was required on the part of the Governor". (9)

In a bitter letter to Hall, Gordon said that the Premier was wrong, and that all important steps,


(9) Ibid, quoted in Gordon to Kimberley, 21 Jan. 1882.
especially those involving other nations, should be referred to the Governor so that he could report on Colonial Affairs to the Secretary of State. The Colonial Office reiterated this by saying that while Her Majesty's Government had no objection to communications between the Colonial Governments and Foreign Powers, it was usual for such communications to be directed through Her Majesty's Diplomatic Representative via the Governor of the Colony.

Gordon added that the Queen's representative should not have to learn of these things from the newspapers. Whether the Government consulted the Governor before coming to a decision was its own affair but "I do not remember that you have ever since my arrival in the Colony consulted me, or asked my opinion on any question which was at the time under the consideration of the Cabinet and undecided." (10) Rather pettishly he declared that Hall would have consulted Robinson, but was "painfully aware" that he (Gordon) did not possess the winning manner of Sir Hercules Robinson. If he had been asked advice he would have been most conscientious and most careful in giving judgement. Here is the tragedy

(10) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Hall, 9 Jan. 1882.
of Gordon's New Zealand Governorship. Capable, astute and eager to give advice, his advances were constantly rebuffed by a jealously possessive Colonial Government. Unfortunately, Gordon was not quite astute enough or large enough to compromise his ideas and ideals to those of his Ministers, and in this way made them reject him more than they would have had he been less overbearing.
5. MINISTERIAL CRISIS.

In early April, as Gordon was preparing to leave, Hall's resignation on the grounds of ill health precipitated another crisis and caused the Governor to remain a while longer in New Zealand until the new Ministry was established. Personally, Gordon was sincerely sorry to receive his resignation although he did not attempt to change the Premier's mind. He told Hall, "you possess some qualities which are not too common among men in political life in New Zealand, and the loss of which will not, I fear, be without disadvantage to public interests." and remembered "the courtesy and good temper you have always shown in our personal intercourse and which I shall always recall with gratitude." (1)

The New Parliament as elected had not yet met and when the Government resigned it was not clear to the Governor where Parliament's confidence was placed. It was doubtful if Hall had a clear majority and it was

(1) Stanmore Correspondence, Gordon to Hall, 4 April 1882.
equally doubtful if the opposition could form a government commanding a majority. Thus Gordon had to get more ample information as to the state of parties, and seek for fresh advisors. He was unwilling to form a temporary Ministry and wanted instead to ensure a more permanent provision. He asked Hall's advice and then caused a furore by seeking Sir George Grey's advice.

Herbert, in the Colonial Office had warned Gordon of Grey even before the Governor took up office in New Zealand. "You will of course have trouble with Sir George Grey." (2) Even the papers added their warning. "Sir Arthur Gordon we hear is as unsuspecting as a child with respect to Sir George Grey's true character and also is quite ignorant of the very low status in which he has fallen in public affairs in New Zealand". (3) The two men were personal

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(3) Otago Daily Times, 22 November 1880.
friends, however, (4) and as Grey had much experience of New Zealand politics, it was natural for Gordon to turn to him for advice quite openly. This was quite constitutional, for as his Ministers had resigned, he was not subject to any advice they might tender and had the discretionary power to decide whom to summon to form a new Ministry.

The papers attacked this action vigorously for they erroneously feared Grey had been called to form a Ministry. They accused Gordon of wanting to replace his Ministers by those more favourable to his native policy and declared that this would fail. "No ministry will be formed with the slightest prospect of retaining office for a month after Parliament meets, that pledges itself in any way to carry out the personal views of Sir Arthur Gordon on native affairs. The bare suspicion of any such subservience to His Excellency

(4) It is typical of Grey that he should have written to Gordon in Fiji and told him that he (Gordon) should detest his appointment in New Zealand and be quite unable to endure it for any time.

will be of itself enough to damn any Ministry that lies under the imputation". (5) The fallen Ministry had followed a sound and equitable native policy said the editor, that had been justified by its success, and Gordon's calling a member of the Opposition was a form of retaliation against the Ministers he could not personally tolerate after their treatment of the Maoris at Parihaka. The Governor had in effect dismissed the Ministry and by summoning Grey had "knocked them downstairs as emphatically as possible, in such a manner as must preclude them from holding any personal relations with him during the continuance of his office in New Zealand." (6) Now the country was experiencing that personal rule, continued the paper, of which they had heard so much from Fiji. "When the Governor came here he gushed about Responsible Government" but he has not acted according to his own definition, stormed the New Zealand Herald. (7) He had strained the interpretation of his prerogative by assuming to himself virtually a position of dictating to the people of New Zealand who

(5) Otago Daily Times, 12 April 1882.
(6) New Zealand Herald, 12 April 1882.
(7) New Zealand Herald, 15 April 1882.
should be their political leader. "The days of personal rule by Colonial Governors are over." (8)
The papers accused Gordon of deliberately disregarding the recommendations of Hall's ministry which was a false allegations as Gordon had received no official recommendations from Hall but only a private suggestion, to choose Whitaker. (9)

All this fury proved foolish and extravagant when it was proved that Gordon had only sought Grey's advice and in fact had asked Whitaker to form a Ministry. The somewhat redfaced editors tried to back track by blustering that Gordon's action had caused a fortnight's precious time to be lost, progress stopped and native policy paralysed at a time when the Maoris were just beginning to accept it. The reaction was important for it showed how unpopular Gordon had become with the New Zealand public. There was even talk that "Governors of this colony should be elected by the people". (10)

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(8) Otago Daily Times, 14 April 1882.
(9) Attorney-General.
(10) New Zealand Herald, 19 April 1882.
Only the Lyttelton Times showed any mature understanding of the situation. "Sir Arthur Gordon has played a difficult game to the end, and played it well. Confronted with a collapsed Government and a divided House of Representatives which has never been assembled together, he had a problem before him of exceptional magnitude" which he has solved with "good sense, calm judgement and constitutional instinct". (11)

It was this camouflaged dissension within the Government that was the key to the whole crisis. Most papers had criticized Gordon for refusing to recall an unshaken administration by summoning a member of the Opposition. The Ministry was far from unshaken. Bryce and Rolleston had in fact resigned before Hall, and serious dissensions in the Cabinet had aggravated Hall's ill health and resignation. In a confidential despatch to Kimberley Gordon related how Hall had only agreed to remain in office if no crisis of Government arose. He did not get this untroubled serenity, for in a telegram he had stated that Bryce "would have to turn over a new leaf" if the Native Minister wished to

(11) Lyttelton Times, 18 April 1882.
stay in the Government. This had caused Bryce to resign and Rolleston with him. "It would have been impossible for Hall and Bryce to have continued to act together in the Cabinet after the language used by the latter in his communications to Mr Hall, but the retirement of Mr Rolleston would have inevitably overthrown the already feeble and tottering ministry of Mr Hall", (12) wrote Gordon to the Secretary of State. The rest of the Government had resigned when the Premier retired, to cover Bryce's and Rolleston's resignations, and in this way had directly concealed the true nature of weakness in the Ministry and brought the Governor into public disrepute when he sought advice elsewhere. Gordon did not think the proceedings "altogether honest and frank" (13) especially when some Ministers raised the novel constitutional doctrine that the Governor is bound to ask and act on the advice of the resigned Ministers. "I hardly need say that this view is not entertained by those who have any extended knowledge of constitutional theory". (14)


(13) Ibid

(14) Ibid
Although the Colonial Office agreed that Gordon had acted properly in the matter, Kimberley's last word "the contempt which Sir Arthur Gordon shows for Parliamentary Ministers is very characteristic of the man. He seems to be without any popular sympathies except for coloured men", (15) demonstrated how unpopular Gordon had become with the Colonial Office as well. The Governor seemed to have an unconscious flair for putting men against him.

(15) Colonial Office 209/241, Kimberley, Minute, 7 June 1882.
6. DEPARTURE FROM NEW ZEALAND.

Gordon was to leave the colony in June on a six month leave of absence, from which most knew he would never return. Instead of a final few weeks of peace, his time was filled with acrimonious debate over the revived question of despatches.

Up to the time of Hall's resignation no decision had been reached as to whether the Governor's despatches on West Coast Native Affairs should be made public. Gordon requested that the suppressed despatches of December 1881 be laid before Parliament as "it does not appear to me that a fair representation of my views has been placed before the Legislature or an adequate opportunity afforded either to Parliament or the public for forming an accurate opinion as to the transactions affected.", (1) and also wanted papers on the Proclamation of 19 October not yet laid before the Legislature to be communicated at the same time.

Whitaker did not want to publish all the memos and despatches on the subject as he feared this would cause hostile comment from Ministers and increase

Maori hostility towards the Crown. He only agreed to publish Gordon's 26 February 1881 despatch and Hall's reply. The Governor maintained that all the papers should be published and not withheld just because he and his advisors held differing views. He claimed always having acted in accordance with Ministers' advice and considered it unfair that they should assume an "attitude of hostility" (2) towards the representative of the Crown, or censure him on a policy they had advised him on. Gordon refuted the charge that his attitude was injurious to the native mind and would not recall his order for publication of the despatches, especially those of 3 and 28 December 1881 which Whitaker was trying to conceal.

These were finally presented to Parliament for approval on the 13 June 1882, an action much criticized as an interference into an Internal matter over which the Imperial Government had no jurisdiction. Individually Ministers protested to the Governor as well, causing more ill-feeling and misunderstanding. Atkinson denied having

(2) Governor General Entry Book of Memoranda for Ministers, Gordon to Whitaker, 8 June 1882.
expressed the hope of "exterminating the Maoris" (3) in event of war, attributed to him by Gordon as an attitude typical of certain settlers. The Governor accepted the disclaimer concerning the particular word but insisted that Atkinson's speeches in and out of Parliament had justified the view. Bryce complained that Gordon had made too great a use of newspaper reports and resented the Governor's reporting that "greedy desire for land" (4) was the reason for opposing Te Whiti. Sir Arthur replied that Bryce's complaint did not alter his opinion that, but for his opposition to settlement, the Maori Chief's other sins would have been more lightly regarded.

When the despatches were made public and printed in the papers only the Lyttelton Times supported the Governor and thought his reports had been the most succinct, impartial and comprehensive utterances yet made on the subject. It was not good that the Premier had suppressed publication of the correspondence, while the protest from Government members proved their guilt. (5)

(3) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1883, A-4, p.24, Atkinson to Gordon, 10 June 1882.

(4) Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1883, A-4, pp 25-6, Bryce to Gordon, 10 June 1882.

(5) Lyttelton Times, 17 and 27 June 1882.
The debate ended only when Gordon himself left New Zealand on 24 June 1882 aboard H.M.S. 'Miranda'. (6) His departure was received with relief by most. The New Zealand Herald, always an apparent opponent, said that His Excellency had done nothing to dispel the unfavourable reputation gained from Fiji and had not inspired affection in any of those brought into contact with him. The Otago Daily Times declared that he has "weakened the bonds that subsist between the Mother Country and her most distant Colony, and strengthened the hands of those who are in favour of an elective Governor". (7) New Zealand had been irritated, the editor continued, at being handed over to a man who fancied he had a mission to interfere into matters which he could not properly understand. "Sir Arthur Gordon will pocket £1250 for simply relieving the Colony of his presence. There may be

(6) The debate was resumed between the New Zealand Government and the Colonial Office when the Imperial Blue Book of Native Affairs Correspondence was published in the Colony in 1883. Atkinson and Prendergast wrote long letters declaring that they were anxious to avoid further controversy, but wanted to put the Secretary of State right on a few of Gordon's points !!! Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1883, A-4, pp 27-31.

some who regard his absence as cheaply bought at that price". (8) Once again the Lyttelton Times came to his defence maintaining that New Zealand had given Gordon the worst possible impression of colonials and that his enemies had made successful gain of Sir Arthur's chivalrous leanings towards a weaker race. "His moral influence on native policy will in future years stand the test of time and reflection." (9)

This was small comfort to the man who left New Zealand disillusioned, bitter and vowing never to return.

(9) Lyttelton Times, 19 May 1882.
7. **CONCLUSION.**

Gordon's next appointment was Ceylon. "The offer was made in the handsomest manner", he exulted, "and I expressed, I hope, all fitting acknowledgements". (1) In some ways it was surprising that he was given such a good position after the disaster of his eighteen months in New Zealand. Gladstone's influence cannot be discounted.

It is difficult to understand why Gordon's time in New Zealand was such a disaster, when, with twenty two years experience and five appointments, he was undisputably a Governor of first rank and great ability. All the blame cannot be laid at his door alone, and both the Colonial Office and the New Zealand Government can be accused of contributing to his failure.

In many ways the position of Constitutional Governor carried its own inherent problems, for the task of maintaining the delicate balance between being a direct agent of the Colonial Office and the head of a political system where he had to take the advice of Ministers was not easy. It meant too

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(1) Chapman, p.264, quoted Stanmore Papers, 49218, Gordon to Selbourne, 21 Nov. 1882.
that the Governor's powers were often illdefined, and, as the Colony gained more and more self government, it became increasingly hard for him to know just what course he should follow in a given situation. Gordon's position was made even more difficult because New Zealand was going through the "adolescent" stage politically, with all the obtuseness, intolerance and immaturity this entailed. The lack of clear party divisions in Parliament lent itself to political crises which, to solve, required a good deal of skill and ability on the part of the Governor.

Paradoxically, just when the Governor was most needed on the New Zealand political scene, for his advice and help, the colony showed a growing antagonism to any independent power and would brook no interference by the Colonial Office or the Governor in internal affairs. There had been some talk of the advantages of replacing an appointed Governor with an elected Governor, during Gordon's time in New Zealand, but it was the mutterings of an extremist minority and was never seriously entertained by the Government. Subsequent Governors proved more amenable to Ministerial advice, so the issue lapsed.
The circumstances surrounding Gordon's appointment to New Zealand were unfortunate in that they predisposed an attitude of resentment; a negative rather than positive approach. The fact that he intended to resign from the appointment as soon as possible was hardly calculated to give New Zealand a "fair go".

The steps from autocratic control in Fiji to Constitutional compliance in New Zealand, has been much emphasized in some quarters as the cause of all the trouble, but Gordon would have accepted this more readily had he been met halfway by the New Zealand Government. It showed a jealousy and petty colonial "smallness" towards everything Gordon did and was supported in this by the public. Ministers, particularly the Premier, made no secret of the fact that they were reluctant to confide in the Governor and often treated him with unforgiveable rudeness. Over the conflicting question of despatches the Government was not open or honest, and its reactions to his criticisms indicated a guilty conscience with regards to Native Affairs. Gordon can be commended for having had the courage to tell the Colonists a few
"unpleasant truths" about their actions in this field, although he frequently showed a lack of wisdom in doing this. His reports to the Colonial Office were too detailed and often presented his own point of view over much. His biggest fault was in being too conscientious and this led him into more trouble than he may have met had he been more phlegmatic. An over-riding sense of responsibility coupled with a personal pride and a sense of his own importance meant that Gordon was unable to let affairs bypass him, and although he did not act unconstitutionally, he caused resentment by always feeling he had to comment or give advice on any question, no matter how unimportant. He considered himself well versed and competent in Native Affairs, and was eager to give help in this field. The New Zealand Government's constant rebuttals to his advances were often rude and unnecessarily cool, but were a reaction against his "meddling".

If Gordon had had more private interests, the time may have passed more bearably. A Constitutional Governor in the later nineteenth Century needed to have interests of a social nature, or interests in affairs other than those affecting the
Government. Gordon, however, was a man devoid of any interest in "pleasurable pursuits", and this not only made him dull and uninspiring in ministerial eyes but also meant that he interfered too much in things they considered to be their demesne alone.

The *Lyttelton Times* gave the fairest verdict when it said "Sir Arthur's ....... [reign] has been stormy, and as far as conciliating opponents goes, quite unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he has done good work, the fruit of which will appear in the future."(3) It is perhaps the greatest confirmation of Sir Arthur's ability that his opinions on Native Affairs were in later years gradually woven into the New Zealand Government's policies, as it began to take a more mature and realistic attitude to Pakeha/Maori relationships. It was a misfortune that Gordon, in some ways ahead of his time in these questions, had to come to New Zealand during a time of anti-maori tendencies; a period of recession in humanitarian ideals.

Gordon's relations with the Colonial Office during these months were hardly more satisfactory

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(3) *Lyttelton Times*, 19 May 1882.
than those with the New Zealand Government had been. It was a blemish on an otherwise successful career. The Imperial Government was increasingly adapting a "hands off" policy with regards to her colonial possessions, and this meant a minimum of advice or instruction to Colonial Governments on any internal affairs. Gordon did not seem to have appreciated this sufficiently, as indicated by his long reports and complaints. The Imperial Government, on the other hand, should have given more support to its own representative. Judging by the comments of staff in the Colonial Office, Gordon had fallen from favour and they refused to show more than nominal interest in his despatches.

In all, Gordon's New Zealand appointment was, for himself, an unhappy frustrating interlude, for the New Zealand Government, a time of irritation and possessive assertions of independence, and for the Colonial Office an incident where they could prove their laissez-faire attitude. The whole affair did nothing to improve New Zealand/United Kingdom relations in these years but rather increased the Colony's suspicion of Colonial Office interference
and fastened resentment. If the Mother Country was wanting to maintain the loyalty of New Zealand, sending such a Governor as Sir Arthur Gordon was not the way most likely to bring success.
In March 1886 at the Queen's Bench, London, Bryce opened libel proceedings against G.W. Rusden, the author of a three volumed 'History of New Zealand', who had blackened Bryce's name in his work, largely on information supplied by Governor Gordon on heresay from Bishop Hadfield. In a letter to Rusden on 23 January 1882, Gordon had enclosed a report, "on which you can rely", supplied by the Bishop, which stated that in 1869 Bryce had cut down Maori women and children "gleefully and with ease". Although the story was suppressed at the time Gordon declared that both Major Kemp (a maori) and Featherston (Superintendent of Wellington) spoke freely of the incident two years later and Bryce was known as "Bryce the Murderer" among the Maoris. Rusden included the incident in his book and for his trouble was virtually ruined by Bryce who received £5,000 damages in the Court verdict. In 1887 Bryce, and in 1888 Atkinson, tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Colonial Office to rebuke or in some way punish Sir Arthur for his part in the affair, and for a time it was a possibility that Bryce would institute a suit against Gordon as well.
Rusden, Gordon charged, had embroidered the memo and published it without his consent. This was not true for in a letter dated 2 July 1883, Gordon had written to Rusden "The enclosed is a rough note of what he (the Bishop) said ....... Copy these papers if they are of any use to you". (1)

Why Gordon let himself take part in such correspondence is inexplicable and shows a spite not typical of his normal relationships. After suffering so much maligning at Bryce's hand he may have welcomed a chance of unofficial retaliation.

The whole affair brought him adverse publicity and caused Gladstone to postpone his impending peerage as long as the possibility of further legal action remained. A London paper thought that Sir Arthur Gordon "appears to have improved upon the tale told him by Bishop Hadfield, and to have played a not very dignified part in a game of Russian Scandal". (2) The New Zealand Government too had their last lash at Gordon in 1888 by trying to prevent his getting a peerage. This failed and in 1893, after returning

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(1) Letters from Hon. J. Bryce to the Secretary of State Respecting Conduct of Sir Arthur Gordon while Governor of New Zealand, Gordon to Rusden 2 July 1883.

from Ceylon, he entered the House of Lords as Lord Stanmore, a position he held till his death on 30 January 1912.
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