

Minister of Defence (Mr. James Allen). The rest waited outside. The Prime Minister promised the deputation that he would summon the Cabinet to meet next day, and that the Minister of Defence would "institute the most searching inquiry."

On the following Monday the Congress received a written reply from the Cabinet. In this document the Ministers promised that an investigation should immediately be made; that the boys should have sufficient food and no solitary confinement, and (most important and remarkable of all) that military duties would not be insisted on.

The Congress voted the reply unsatisfactory, and a meeting at Wellington, at which a thousand persons were present, demanded the abolition of conscription, expressed its high appreciation of the courage of those suffering imprisonment and military detention, and protested against military tyranny in New Zealand.

#### A "SEARCHING" ENQUIRY.

On that same Monday (July 7th), Adjutant-General Lieutenant-Colonel R. J. Collins, accompanied by Colonel Smythe, officer commanding the district, visited the island. His mission, according to the New Zealand Press Association, was "to ascertain from personal observation whether there was any basis to justify the Minister in ordering a public enquiry." It appears that the only witnesses examined were Lieutenant Macdonald, Sergeant-Major Conley and Bombardier Moir, and that the prisoners were neither present nor represented. Colonel Collins sent them a message that he would hear any or all of them singly and alone. The boys, however, insisted that they should all be in the room together; they wanted a public enquiry. Neither party would yield, and

consequently the report which Colonel Collins presented next day to the Minister conveyed only one side of the case. It whitewashed the officers and minimised the complaints of the boys. It stated, citing medical authority, that the reduced rations were sufficient when the boys were not working, that only one youth was reported sick, and that he was "suffering from biliousness." In other respects, none of its statements as to facts were materially inconsistent with the story as told by the boys. This was the sequel to the Premier's promise of "a most searching enquiry." No other was held. With the report before him, and noting that Lieutenant Macdonald had "held services and presented them with two Bibles and two hymn books," and that one or more of them had been very disrespectful to the Adjutant-General-Lieutenant-Colonel and those who sent him, the Minister concluded that the boys were only "out for misrule."

#### THE BOYS' MANIFESTO.

They were, of course, sometimes noisy and even disorderly, but they threatened their persecutors with nothing worse than publicity. The great fact is that they steadily refused to do what they believed to be wrong. They proved in the only possible way that the manifesto which they sent to their comrades outside was something far finer than mere bravado. Here it is:

"To the Passive Resisters of New Zealand.—'We, the undersigned prisoners on Ripa Island wish to take this opportunity of sending out a word of encouragement to our comrades still at liberty. We are winning and winning well. Our captors have failed to make us fall into their devilish traps. Threats, solitary confinement and reduced rations have been tried and have proved useless; hoaxing and bribery have met with the same fate. We are determined and united; we are pledged to uphold to our last breath the