

Appendix B.

Mr. Fenton's First
Minute on Native
Affairs.
13 October, 1856.

the Government in a defensive position, beyond which it cannot recede without entirely abdicating its functions.

In a previous part of this minute, in noticing the merely temporary nature of the benefactions bestowed on the Maories, I have excepted from the category the schools which are supported mainly by the Government. But here, also, reflection will bring to notice the remarkable fact, that the utility of these institutions is to a great extent neutralized by the entire absence of any provision for the future establishment of the youth of both sexes who leave the schools, a comparatively educated class, accustomed to civilization, and trained in orderly habits. The impression made upon the general character and social customs of the Maori population, by the infusion amongst them of these examples of a superior condition, has been slight, almost imperceptible. Nor can a different result be expected. One, amongst many, the school-Native finds himself, on his return to his home, an isolated being; he good, which he has spent years in acquiring, rapidly disappears amidst the circumstances of evil by which he is on all sides surrounded.

It has been observed by some, that the British power, having bestowed upon the Maories every right to which a white citizen is entitled, is free from any further claim for extra assistance or special protection. But, in reality, this is a very unfair argument. When the uneducated Maori is placed side by side with the intelligent and highly cultivated member of an elaborate civilisation, he is at once subjected to an amount of competition which first astonishes and ultimately disheartens him. In the great contest for livelihood, for which every member of a civilized community is educated, and to which his energies are entirely devoted, the bewildered Maori clearly distinguishes nothing, beyond an all-absorbing eagerness to acquire property, and suspects the professions which are made to him, that the success and advancement of his own race is an object that interests every European. Unable to endure the social attrition to which he is subjected, he abandons the contest, or pursues it in a listless and indolent manner that can never result in any great measure of success. It is therefore the duty of the governing body, either to relieve him from the liabilities to which he is subject, as one of a civilised community, or by rendering him assistance which the educated member does not require, place him in a position in which the general conditions of success may be equalised.

Nor, is it more just to say that, considering the expense of the Governmental Departments rendered necessary, solely by the Maori ingredient in the population of this country, any monetary assistance, to further them in their course of civilisation, should be granted with a sparing hand. When the amount contributed by the Natives to the indirect revenue of the Colony, together with the profit realised by the Government on the re-sale of the purchased lands, is considered, a heavy balance is seen to remain in their favour. The public works, on which surplus revenue is expended, the expenses of assisted immigration, the maintenance of Provincial establishments, the sums expended for postal service, &c., &c., can scarcely be said to be other than expenditure for services solely in the white interest. The Rangiaohia road, and the Hokianga and Kororareka road, present the only instances known to myself, in which the revenue of the country has been expended in public works in purely Native districts. And in both these cases the grants were made on the solicitations of members of the European population, who largely participated in the trade, for the convenience of which the roads would serve.

Having thus glanced at the position of Native politics, it might be proper to notice the ideas which occupy men's minds, with reference to the solution of this question, which has, only in the time of the present Governor, risen to occupy its proper position, as the all-important problem of the day. But these are so numerous, differing with the various objects sought to be attained, and most of them so impracticable or ill-matured, that a desirable brevity requires that I should proceed at once to state the plan which I conceive to be calculated to effectuate many of the objects now sought to be attained by Government, and at the same time to destroy the uneasy and dangerous ideas gradually occupying the Maori mind, and to supply the "ignotu n" which they have long been seeking, but have been unable to describe.

In the preceding arguments and future explanations, I have taken as an admitted fact, that His Excellency, resolved to carry out to the utmost demands of honor, the engagements already entered into, by the British Government with the Maori people, is anxious to convert them into citizens enjoying with the whites the benefit of civilization, rather than, by slow and insidious process, to cause them gradually to recede and ultimately disappear, before the enduring energy of the encroaching race.

What then are the conditions required by natural laws affecting civilisation? "To have civilisation (writes the author of "Vestiges of Natural History of Creation") it is necessary that a people should be numerous and closely placed; that they should be fixed in their habitations, and safe from violent external and internal disturbance; that a considerable number of them should be exempt from the necessity of drudging for immediate subsistence. Feeling themselves at ease about the first necessities of their nature, including self-preservation, and daily subjected to that intellectual excitement which society produces, men begin to manifest what is called civilisation; but never when in rude and shelterless circumstances, or when widely scattered. *Fixity of residence* and *thickening of population* are perhaps the prime requisites for civilisation, and hence it will be found that all civilisations as yet known have taken place in regions physically limited." Mr. Catlin, in his work on the North American Tribes, describes a remarkable civilisation existing amongst the Mandans, a tribe, far placed amongst those which inhabit the vast region of the North West, and quite beyond the reach of any influence from the whites, and this improvement he attributes to the fact of their being a small tribe, obliged by fear of their more numerous enemies to settle in a *permanent village*.