

Appendix B.

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

the sale of the surplus produce will be very considerable. I think it is not extravagant to expect that in the fourth year they will be in a condition to repay the whole, or the greater part, of the money advanced to them by the Government.

I may here remark that I do not propose to grant funds by way of complete gift, for I am persuaded that little good is produced by money or articles given for no services rendered, (hospitality excepted.) Far from feeling gratitude for the gift, the Maori suspects the motive of the giver, and tries to discover what is his object in giving, or else merely marvels at what he considers a weak proceeding. The system of lending, however, is admirable. The ever-present feeling of responsibility, acts as a stimulus to exertion, and increases rather than weakens self-respect.

I also place much stress on the necessity of causing the Maories with whom this scheme is commenced to feel the responsibility which they are undertaking, and to recognise the fact, that they are the objects of an experiment on which the attention of the Governor is anxiously fixed, and that success or failure will materially affect the ultimate position of the whole Maori race. For this purpose, they should be invested with the entire control over the funds allotted. They readily acceded to my proposition, that the management of the whole concern should be vested in themselves as a Committee, and that Mr. Maunsell should always be present at their meetings, should give his advice, but should have no power in otherwise influencing their decisions; that the resident agriculturist should also be present, so that they might receive the benefit of his experience and knowledge; that accounts should be kept of all outgoings and incomings; that copies of these accounts should be periodically furnished to Government; that each member of the community should be debited a fixed amount for each day he neglects to work, unless absent with the approbation of the Committee; and that the sale of produce, and the division or reinvestment of the profits should similarly form the subject of deliberation of the community assembled, as arranged, in Committee. Further, one of the number, who acts as accountant, will be appointed as store-keeper, the profits resulting from the store to be part of the funds of the community.

A rough estimate of the funds necessary to be advanced by Government for this experiment does not show that the effort to be made is very great, or at all commensurate with the good likely to be produced: I think that the risk of ultimate loss ought not to be taken as an item in the calculation, for in case of even utter failure, of which there is no reasonable chance, the Maories would repay the advance by a cession of territory.

Rough Estimate for first year.

	£	s.	d.
Resident Agriculturist,	70	0	0
Horses, Plough, Cart, &c.,	150	0	0
Seed,	30	0	0
Warden (hereafter explained)	20	0	0
Store,	40	0	0
Sundries,	40	0	0
	<u>£350</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

For the second year £200 perhaps will be required.

Having now briefly stated the practical part of the scheme, let me advert for a moment to the grave and difficult questions which will be affected by its accomplishment.

The subject of cattle trespass will cease to create difficulties, as farms will be properly fenced, and the cattle belonging to the Maories will be grazed on their own paddocks.

They will gradually learn that a limited piece of land, properly cultivated, is of more value to them than the vast tracts now held in a state of nature. They will thus be willing to sell their surplus lands. And adjoining tribes, anxious to adopt a system of which they have seen the *practical advantages*, will be anxious to sell land for the purpose of raising funds to enable them to commence a similar process. Thus will be destroyed the prejudicial effects of any land league.

The obnoxious custom of abandoning partially-exhausted land, to be taken possession of by weeds, will be stopped, and the Maories, possessing abundant means of feeding stock, will become breeders of cattle and growers of wool.

Communities, established as proposed, will fill the void existing, and will fitly receive the adult Maori who leaves the school, a comparatively civilised being. The female school-Maori, marrying one of a community, will find that she is capable of carrying with her the habits of order, and many of the ideas of comfort to which she has been for years accustomed. At present, she rapidly sinks to the level of the surrounding rudeness, or, unable to endure the miserable change, seeks to ameliorate her position by connection with a European, or adds another to the degraded class who minister to the appetites of our town populations.

The Maories will recognise the truth of our professions of interest in their welfare when they see the practical results of our propositions, and will regard the British authority with affection and respect, and gradually abandon the deep-rooted feeling of a distinct nationality.

The very desirable object of issuing Crown Titles may be gradually introduced, by granting the lands thus defined and fenced, either to the communities or, in a more advanced stage, to individuals.

The *real property* of the country will be increased; and, on the scheme now proposed, may be ingrafted the opposite idea, recently mentioned to me by Mr. Sewell, of making part of the payments of land in something *real*, that will not be dissipated by extravagance, but will form a permanent addition to the fixed property of the country.