

I have referred to that success only as evidence of the soundness of that policy. For the duty of the Government is, of course, quite independent of the question of success. The National compact, by which we obtained an entrance into these Islands, binds us irrevocably as long as we retain the benefit of the contract.

At this present time, the special difficulties which are connected with the Native question are, first, a diminished willingness on the part of many of the Natives to part with their lands; and, secondly, a desire on the part of many amongst them to set up some sort of internal organization for themselves, more or less independent of us. This latter tendency is sometimes spoken of as the "Maori King Movement," because one section of the Waikato tribe adopted that title for their old Chief Tewherowhero, or (as he is now more commonly called) Potatau. He himself has uniformly refused any title but that of *Matua* (Father). Some violent men in the Waikato district may have desired to carry this Maori organization to the length of actual independence of the Queen; but I believe such persons to have been and to be even now few in number, though the excitement of the present war may naturally increase their number; the strong good sense of the people at large shews them that such a state of things is neither practicable nor desirable.

Indeed no exaltation of one tribe or one Chief over others can last long anywhere. In Waikato itself, some of the leading supporters of the movement have already cooled down and begun to draw off from it. The mass of the people are neither willing nor able to contribute money for its support. The whole thing has no internal strength: nothing but opposition from without can hold it together.

As to the greater part of this Island, it is rendered wholly impracticable by the mutual antipathies of the tribes, growing out of the remembrance of deadly wars in past time. Thus, the very first stirring of this question in Waikato caused public and unanimous counter-demonstrations throughout the North of the Island.

The Eastern tribes stand aloof. Even the Southern tribes (Taranaki), ravaged in the last generation by Waikato, did not seek an alliance with Waikato until they found it necessary to procure some aid in the present war; and, after all, their overtures were rejected. For the same reason William King stood aloof.

It is in Waikato itself, as lying near to Auckland, that the existing difficulties of the Native question are most apparent. The movement there is commonly regarded by the settlers as a wholly unreasonable or half hostile proceeding on the part of the Maoris.

To get a right understanding of it, it must be viewed from their side also.

The Natives were at first exceedingly eager to possess European tools, weapons, clothing, &c., and, to procure them, they readily parted with land, of which they had plenty. In course of time they began to perceive that the position of a Chief was lowered as the territory of his tribe was narrowed; and both Chief and people found that the permanent alienation of their land yielded them little permanent benefit. As their constant saying is, "The land abides, the payment perishes."

Again, there have always been leading men, in Waikato and elsewhere, who have been willing to act under the Governor to keep peace in their districts. Such an arrangement was good for both. The chief's position was sustained, and our influence extended. But they have found the remuneration for their services so scanty that they have not been disposed to continue in an employment so unattractive and unprofitable. They have been even laughed at by their own people for their simplicity in being content to work on such terms.

Whatever else there may be in the Waikato movement, there is, as to these two causes of dissatisfaction, no lack of good sense. In fact, we are, I believe, all agreed with the Waikato men on these two points. Their proceedings are an unconscious attestation to the soundness of the views set forth in His Excellency's Despatches of last year relating to this subject.

To remedy these great defects in our Maori policy, His Excellency has, I understand, already pointed out to the Home Government the necessity of adopting the following rules, namely:—

1. That, on every sale of lands by any tribe to the Crown, a certain portion of the land should be granted back by the Crown to the natives for their own use, and another portion to trustees for the support of schools, magistrates, &c.

2. That a more liberal scale of payment should be adopted for the native magistrates.

If the salary be fixed at £40 or £50 a-year, one half at least should be paid by the Government, the rest being defrayed out of the fines levied during the year, or out of the endowment for that purpose. It is probable that the amount needed for the whole of the native magistrates throughout the island, and their assistants, would not exceed £3000 at the utmost. No charge could better deserve a place on the Civil List than this.

3. That the native runangas or councils of the tribes should, on certain conditions, be recognised by the Government, and should be allowed to propose regulations for their own internal government and good order, which, when assented to by the Governor, should be enforced by their own magistrates.

The practical advantages of this course would be very great. A lawful and regular government would be gradually established within the tribes, and the Government in all its transactions with the tribes would have a definite body of persons with whom to deal.

The Governor has also already set before the Home Government the reasons why the existence of a board specially charged with the carrying out of these and similar regulations is essentially necessary.

The functions of such board would continue until the superfluous lands of the natives were purchased, and the conditions of the purchase performed; and until the native communities were sufficiently organised for their own internal government and good order, and that upon soil secured to them by Crown grants.