

1857, I visited the Natives of that Province, while the Tribes respectively of Te Hapuku and of Te Moananui were fighting. I gathered from Te Moananui's people that the ground of a quarrel, which cost them many lives on both sides, was the land,—that their first land sales had been managed by Te Hapuku at their request, and that the proceeds had been fairly divided,—but that subsequently Hapuku had taken upon himself to dispose of lands to which he had only an indirect claim, reserving to himself the larger share, and in some cases the whole of the payment,—that, at the time when they made this statement to me, Hapuku was living upon their land, and that they were determined he should live no longer upon it, lest he should sell that also.

In a letter written by Renata Kawepo, the principal Chief of Te Paneiri Tribe, to the Superintendent of the Province of Napier, the Native feeling in reference to the late purchases of land is put forth in forcible language. He writes, "Listen, while I tell you of the last errors of Mr. McLean, after we had wiped out his former ones, the mistakes that were made subsequently—viz., Omarutairi and Ngapairuru: these are what I am going to tell you quietly about. Omarutairi was a piece of land held by the owners as a reserve for themselves, the greater part of their possessions being already alienated. When Mr. McLean went to Te Aute, it was reported that this land was sold. The owners went straight off and said, 'Mr. McLean, don't buy that land.' They remained three days, repeating this, and then went away; and afterwards the money was secretly paid to two persons. As to Ngapaeruru, this land was for sale,—but, by reason of the faulty purchase, you did not obtain it. This was the fault:—Two men came to sell this land by stealth to Mr. McLean. The owners heard of it, and wrote a letter to Mr. McLean not to pay any money to those men. When they reached Mr. McLean, one of us saw them there, Karaitiana Takamoana, who suspected that they must have come to sell the land secretly. Karaitiana put Mr. McLean upon his guard, who replied, 'You are right, for I have got a letter from Paora Tamaihotua.' Karaitiana read the letter, and then said to Mr. McLean 'This letter is correct. Don't you give any money for the land to these men,—but pay your money into the hands of the Tribe on the spot, that the land may pass with a clear title to you.' Mr. McLean consented to this; and, as soon as Karaitiana was gone, he paid £400, as the price of Ngapaeruru. That was the fault in the case of these two men. You appear to suppose that, by getting hold of a single individual, you can gain an advantage over him. Hereafter, whenever a majority consent to a sale, it shall take place. Let us have no more blundering. All our troubles have arisen from faulty working: and on this account it was that the door of selling was shut. But, when the system of buying is amended, the door will be opened, that the sales may be conducted on a regular plan. Whenever the Government shall have laid down some equitable system of land purchase, and when calm is once restored, then the Tribes who are for selling, will sell their lands under a properly regulated system.

"You tell me that our internal quarrels had put an end to the system of assembling us together, that all might witness the alienation of the land; but we see that no land was sold at the time of war,—it was sold before the fighting began, and afterwards, also, when peace had been made, some land was sold. And who was the cause of this? A man who goes up to Auckland, and there sells the land, and the first thing the owners hear about it is that the land is gone. Others went off to Wellington, and there sold; and the first I heard of it was that my own place, Okawa, was gone,—and several others the same. Did these cases arise from the war? You buy inside your houses, and the first I hear of it, a man has passed by with the money, while I am continually saying 'Pay your money in the presence of the Tribe to whom the land belongs, that you may obtain it with a clear title.'"

Further evidence may be gathered, as to dissatisfaction produced in the Native mind by this irregular system of land purchases, from a letter of the Rev. S. Williams, printed in the *New Zealander* of the 11th May, in which particular cases are given; but I content myself with one extract, to shew the connexion of this subject with the Land League, and with the King movement. "The first circular that I saw from the King party," writes Mr. Williams, "relative to the land question, was to the effect that they wished to prevent persons selling land not their own, or not their exclusive property. Some time after this they appeared to be trying to prevent the sale of land altogether, excepting when the sanction of the Maori King was obtained; and, when I enquired the reason, I was told that the object was to protect themselves against a change of circumstances,—that, as long as Sir George Grey and Colonel Wynyard were in the country, they had an appeal, in the event of an unjust sale,—but, since that time, they had been handed over to the tender mercies of the Land Purchase Commissioner, who almost entirely disregarded their remonstrances. I have for some time felt convinced that, if the purchase of land were conducted upon some more satisfactory system than has of late been adopted, and some Court were constituted by the Government more applicable to Maori cases, the King movement and the Anti-land-selling League would speedily crumble away,—and that the whole Maori population would prefer being under British rule, rather than under their own 'runangas,' which are very cumbersome, and, in many instances, severe in their decisions."

I am told that at the present juncture, the point which is most desired by the Government is the abandonment of the Maori King movement. I know too that I speak correctly when I say that the desire is equally strong in the breasts of all those who are designated "Maori sympathisers," and especially of the body of the clergy of the Church of England, and a strong effort has been made to induce the Natives to give up this point. But I much doubt whether just at the present time this object will be effected. The Natives will naturally say we were driven by circumstances to combine in a Land League, and we have felt that our League would best be kept together by having a recognised head, like that which we see in our Maori King; before, therefore, we give up what we