

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO

NATIVE AFFAIRS;

BEING

A DESPATCH FROM SIR W. DENISON, K.C.B., TO HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

LAI'D UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE BY MR. WARING TAYLOR, JUNE 19TH, 1861,
AND ORDERED TO BE PRINTED.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

No. 1.

COPY OF A DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR SIR W. DENISON, K.C.B., TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

Government House, Sydney, 8th June, 1860.

Received, August 10th, 1860.

MY LORD DUKE,—

When the Governor of New Zealand applied to me for assistance in the difficulty which had arisen (No. 63.) between his Government and the Maories, he sent up for my information a sort of a manifesto drawn up by Mr. Richmond, one of the Members of his Executive Council; a copy of which I transmitted to your Grace with my Despatch No. 42, dated 12th April last.

In my correspondence with Colonel Gore Browne, I alluded to the exposition of the policy of the Government contained in this document, and I received from him the more formal document (which I herewith enclose) drawn up by Mr. Richmond as the mouthpiece of the Ministry at Auckland, explanatory of the opinions entertained by the advisers of the Governor, of the state of the relations between the Maories and the white population.

In a private letter to Colonel Gore Browne, a copy of which I take the liberty of forwarding herewith, I have commented upon the document put forth by his advisers, and have at the same time sketched out a course of policy, which would as it appears to me, remedy many of the evils which have arisen out of the anomalous system hitherto pursued towards the Maories.

If the present state of relations between the two races is allowed to continue, outbreaks like the present will occur periodically, demands will be made for Military assistance with which it will be difficult to comply, and claims for assistance from the Imperial Treasury which will not be willingly responded to, and which, if entertained, will only serve as precedents for similar demands from other Colonies.

A change, therefore, in the mode of dealing with the Native Race in New Zealand is urgently required, and I trust that in bringing, as I have done, my views of the character of this change before the Governor of New Zealand, and in submitting them to your Grace, I shall not be deemed to have meddled presumptuously in a matter with which I have no concern.

I have, &c.,

W. DENISON.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,

&c., &c., &c.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Government House, Sydney,
May 16, 1860.

MY DEAR GORE BROWNE,—

The mail having closed, I am more at leisure to look into and discuss the contents of the printed documents which you sent me, containing the expression of the views and opinions of your Responsible Advisers in the present state of Maori Affairs.

I do not think that you have derived much information from this document. The views and opinions of your Responsible Advisers are to all appearance confined to these: First, that they ought to have something to say in the discussion of questions having reference to the Natives (of whom I may observe, by the way, they are in no way the representatives); and second, that as they are unable to defend themselves, England should step in to help them.

With reference to the first of these opinions, I may observe that the collision between the races would have been precipitated, had the settlement of questions affecting the Maories been left to the white men, who have a direct interest in obtaining the principal article which the Native has to dispose of—namely, his land. With reference to the second opinion, every one will of course admit that the Mother Country is bound to defend the Colonies, and to help them out of difficulties; but there yet remains these questions—Against whom are they to be defended? and, What is the nature and extent of the assistance to be afforded?

Mr. Richmond's papers, however, open up a much wider question than was, I think, contemplated by him and his colleagues—nothing less than that of the whole policy of the Government as regards the Maories; and to this I will now address myself, taking as correct the statements made of the facts relative to the establishment of the Presidency of Potatau, but exercising my own discretion as to the admission or rejection of the inferences whether as to the motives which have influenced the Natives in their movement, or as to the results which are likely to flow from it.

The fact then which appears to be established, is the willing assent of a large proportion of the Maori Race to the establishment of some system of Government amongst themselves.

Mr. Richmond passes over very lightly the causes which have induced a people consisting of Clans or Septs, analogous to those which used to occupy the Highlands of Scotland, to forget their old feuds and to unite together for a common object. He says little or nothing as to the origin of the wish on the part of the Maori, to subvert the Queen's authority over the Northern Island, and but little more as to the foundation of their wish to prohibit all further alienation of land to the Crown—might not however the movement have its origin in the conviction of the Natives that their position as nominal subjects of the Queen, while it brought them under a variety of limitations, preventing them from selling their land to private individuals, and subjecting them to taxation at the hands of the white population occupying the sea-ports, did absolutely nothing for their benefit, and was the means of preventing the introduction of more wholesome social arrangements, having a tendency as administered to retain them in the position of isolated savage Tribes, instead of assisting to raise them to the rank of a people? And with regard to the alienation of land, might there not exist a well founded distrust of a Government, which, while it will not permit the sale of land to individuals, does, by holding out inducements which few savages are able to resist, acquire the article which the Maori has to sell at a very low rate (6d. or 1s. an acre) which article is instantly retailed to the white man at 10s. an acre.

The fact is that Mr. Richmond's letter is based on the assumption that New Zealand is a Colony of white people, with whom unluckily there happens to be mixed up a portion of the Native race strong enough to make itself respected. His policy and that of his colleagues would lead to steps which, if they were backed up by England, would in a short time annihilate the Maori race, and permit the occupation by the white man of the rich land yet in native hands, upon which for years past greedy and longing eyes have been cast.

My view, however, of the Maori is very different—he is the subject of the Queen, and as such is entitled to have his rights respected, his feelings considered; he has shown an aptitude for civilization which ought to be encouraged; his efforts to raise himself in the social scale should be assisted. If this policy were carried out steadily and consistently, all causes of disaffection would soon be done away with; there would be an end to these petty measures, which, while they cause a large expenditure of money, result in nothing but an aggravation of the feeling of hostility between the races. The Government would, it is true, be abused by certain classes of the white population—the land speculators might grumble, but I feel convinced that the prosperity of the Colony, and the happiness of the people would be promoted by such a change of system.

You may say that all this is Utopian, that it supposes a state of things which cannot exist. This, however, would be to beg the question. You may, however, very fairly ask by what means it is proposed to work out such a re-organization of society. If you recollect, when I was with you in 1857, we were talking of the policy to be adopted towards the Maories, and I then suggested that your legislation should be based upon the positive fact that the inhabitants of the colony consisted of two distinct races, whose amalgamation, however desirable it might be, could not be expected to take place for very many years. My opinion now is much the same as it was then, and the late occurrences have only served to give greater distinctness and precision to that which in 1857 was more an instinctive feeling than a carefully-formed opinion.

You have now as a fact the establishment of something analogous to a general government among the Maories, a recognition on their part of the necessity of some paramount authority: this is a step in the right direction; do not ignore it. Do not, on the ground that some evil may possibly spring from it, make the Natives suspicious of your motives by opposing it, but avail yourself of the opportunity to introduce some more of the elements of good government among them. Suggest to them the necessity of defining and limiting the power of the person who has been elected as the Chief or King (I should not quarrel with the name) of establishing some system of legislation, simple, of course, at first, but capable of being modified and improved, but do not attempt to introduce the complicated arrangements suited to a civilized and educated people; recognize publicly and openly the Maories not merely as individual subjects of the Queen, but as a race, a body whose interests you are bound to respect and promote, and then give to that body the means of deciding what those interests are, and of submitting them in a proper form for your consideration. This you may say will be very well for the future, but how will it affect the issue of the present quarrel between the Government and the Maories? It appears to me that it will have a most material operation upon the combination of the Maories. If Potatau and his abettors are made aware that there is a prospect of obtaining by legitimate means a recognition of their position and an acknowledgment of their rights, they will hardly be induced to plunge into a contest in which they must eventually be worsted. They will withdraw from the present contest, and leave you to deal with Kingi and his immediate adherents, and these, when they find themselves unsupported by the other tribes, will speedily be brought to submission.

The first effect, of course, of the new system of policy will be the cessation of purchases of land from the Maories. They will decline to sell, and were I in your place, I should be in no hurry to buy. In proportion, however, as the Maori gets more civilized, will his appetite for gain overpower his nationality, and he will be found in a short time quite willing to part with his land to purchasers who will give him a better price for it than his Native friends. I do not therefore believe the prohibition of sales to the Government would prevail for any length of time, in case the Government can be persuaded to give the full value for the land, but you will have to give up your present practice of purchasing land at a cheap rate from some of your subjects, and of retailing it at a high rate to others—in fact the Government must show itself impartial, and if circumstances compel it to limit the power of the Maori to sell to any but the Government, the latter must give him the full market value of his land, less of course, the costs of survey, &c.

I do not think you would have much difficulty under such circumstances in arranging for the cession or purchase of a certain amount of land round New Plymouth in order to get rid of the anomalous state of things produced by the mode in which the Government has purchased land in isolated patches, to which there is no access except through land belonging to the Maories.

I ought to apologize for giving you my "views and opinions" as to a matter of which I have but a partial knowledge, but thinking that these views and opinions are more clear, and based upon sounder principles than those of your Responsible Advisers, I gave them to you for what they are worth.

There is no question but that the common and ordinary mode of dealing with the differences between the white man and the Maori, would be to treat the latter as a rebel, to pour in troops regardless of expense, and eventually to sweep away a race which occupies land of which the white man professes to be in want, though he has millions of acres of which he can or does make no use. This, however, is a very costly mode of dealing with such a matter, to say nothing of its immorality and injustice.

The Imperial Government will have to pay a high price for the land, which after having purchased it with its blood and treasure, it hands over to the Colonists to sell for their benefit.

While, then, the ordinary course of proceeding will be found both immoral and impolitic, that which I have sketched out will be conducive to the best interests of the Government and the people, and as such I commend it to your consideration.

Believe me to be, &c.,

W. DENISON.

