

that which emanated from the Queen. The conclusion finally adopted by the meeting was that the Governor's proposal should be taken into consideration, and that an answer should be given to me on my return from visiting the other tribes in the Bay of Plenty. The conference lasted six hours, and was conducted with the utmost propriety; the most zealous partizans of the Maori King abstaining from anything like violent or intemperate language. One of the most intelligent among the moderate party, Rawiri Puhirake, expressed his approval of the Governor's plan as having for its object the good of the people, but required as a further proof of the beneficent intentions of the Government, that no more Native territory should be acquired. "Be content," he said, "with what you have. Be it your care to restrain the buyers, we will restrain the sellers; but if land-selling goes on it will bring death." I explained that the proposed system would provide against any questionable transactions with respect to land, as nothing could be done without the knowledge and consent of the Runanga; but that it would not be right to restrict the liberty of any tribe or individual with respect to the disposal of his own property. He replied, "Let the Government be cautious; if land is bought there will be trouble."

As I had observed that a large portion of the Tauranga Natives belonging to Maungatapu were not represented at this meeting, I determined to visit them before leaving Tauranga, and proceeded to Maungatapu accordingly on the 20th by appointment. I was received most cordially by the people who had assembled to meet me, numbering about 100, their Assessor, Maihi Pohepohe, being absent with Mr. Clarke. Three flags were flying from a pole standing in the centre of the pa; the uppermost a white one with the word "Kuini" in one corner, the second white with a blue circle in the centre, the lower one a union jack.

After the preliminary speeches, business was commenced in the same way as at the previous meeting. The replies were somewhat similar in character, but the large majority here were for accepting the proposed plan, and when the question was put to the meeting whether assent should be given the affirmative was carried almost unanimously. Some of the Chiefs, however, took occasion to stipulate as the condition on which their assent was given, that the officers of justice should be Maoris only.

Considering that not less than two-thirds of the Tauranga Natives are professed Maori Kingites, I see no reason for dissatisfaction with the reception the proposal of the Government has met. I have also heard that their subsequent discussions have had favourable results. Any attempt to persuade those who are pledged to the Waikato King party to withdraw from their present position would, I feel satisfied, prove fruitless. Some of them have been to Taranaki; among them a young Chief, Hirini, who was killed at Mahoetahi.

Among the favourable signs which I have had the opportunity of observing, should be mentioned the fact, that a Runanga has been established at Tauranga, to which has been given the name of the "Runanga Tapu," or "Sacred Runanga." Its president is an intelligent young man, who received his education at St. John's College, Auckland, and was for several years the master of a school at Otaki. This Runanga comprises among its members both King's men and Queen's, who have agreed to waive their respective political creeds, and combine together for the purpose of devising a system of rules and regulations founded on the Mosaic code for the exclusive behoof of their own people (Tauranga). Henare assures me that his ultimate object is to bring his Runanga under the auspices of the Government, but that for the present it is essential to the success of his plan that he should stand aloof. He informed me that William Thompson had asked for a copy of their rules, but that he would not comply with the request, lest by doing so he should appear to refer them to him for confirmation or sanction. The rules made by this Runanga are generally respected in Tauranga, and fines for their breach are frequently recovered. There are several other Runangas in Tauranga. Every Assessor has his Runanga, and depends mainly upon it for the support of his authority. I believe that it will be found necessary to recognize in some shape or other these local Runangas; the District Runanga composed of Assessors will not, so far as I can see, be accepted as a substitute. The Natives do not place confidence in the administration of their Assessors alone, and the Runangas act both as an aid and as a check to them.

On the 21st, Mr. Clarke returned from his circuit. After communicating with him on the subject of my instructions and hearing his report on the state of the district, which appeared to be favourable, I arranged to proceed to Maketu on the 23rd, where he was to join me in a few days, and then accompany me inland. I accordingly started for this place on the day named, and the day following had a most satisfactory meeting with the Natives resident here. Their expressions of loyalty and willingness to accept the Governor's plan were most emphatic. Runangas are here also in full operation, and nothing is to be done without them. Acting upon my instructions to recognize the Maori Runanga, I have induced the people here to consent to nominate one Runanga for this place, to which may be entrusted the making of such arrangements as may be necessary to carry out His Excellency's plans.

I leave this on Monday, the 30th instant, for the Lake District, having been requested to postpone my visit to the Ngatipikiao, of Te Rotoiti, until that date.

The Honorable the Minister for Native Affairs,
&c., &c., &c.

I have, &c.,
T. H. SMITH.

No. 3.

REPORT FROM H. T. CLARKE ESQ., R.M.

Having arranged to leave Tauranga on the 20th of this month (November) I had sent a circular letter to the Assessors and Chiefs residing at the different Pas and Kaingas along the coast informing them of the day on which I hoped to arrive at each place.