

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

KARERES.

Wiremu Te Matewai }
Ihaka Nga Kaho } Te Matapihi.

Pikaka Tamumu, Opoutea.
Te Moananui, Motuhua.

THOS. H. SMITH,
Civil Commissioner.

April 8th, 1862.

No. 8.

FURTHER REPORT FROM T. H. SMITH, ESQ., CIVIL COMMISSIONER.

Maketu, Bay of Plenty,
May 28th, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report for the information of His Excellency's Government, my return from a visit to the Ngatiawa tribes residing in the eastern portion of this district, on the Awa-o-te-Atua, Rangitaiki, and Whakatane rivers, and to submit for approval the arrangements made by me for bringing these tribes under Sir George Grey's plan of Native government.

On Tuesday, the 13th instant, I proceeded to Te Awa-o-te-Atua, by appointment, to meet the three principal tribes residing at the various settlements on that river, the Ngatirangihorihori, Ngatihikakino and Te Tawera. I was accompanied by the principal Chief of the whole district, Rangitukehu (who had just returned from a visit to Auckland), two Native Assessors from this place, the Chairman of the Tarawera Runanga, and other Native Chiefs. A meeting was held on the following day, the proceedings being opened by one of my Assessors, who in an excellent speech set forth the advantage of accepting the offer of the Government to assist them in establishing law and order among them; reminding them that the *pakeha* found them cannibals, and that to his religion they owed what improvement had taken place in their condition. He combated the notion that in inviting them to accept the new system the ulterior object of the Governor was to get hold of their land; showing that it was the Government which had interposed its authority to put a stop to the indiscriminate alienation of their lands, by making a law to prohibit Europeans from buying Native land, which law was still in force; the Government therefore was their best security against being dispossessed of their land. To it, not to the Maori King, which was an invention of yesterday, did they owe it that so much of the land was still theirs. He protested against listening to the Waikato fiction about making the land sacred, by covering it with their flag and repudiating the Queen's authority;—that was the way to lose their land; the Queen's flag was a much more secure protection.

Several Chiefs spoke in reply. Some were in favor of trying the new system, others raised various objections to thus identifying themselves with the Government, lest the consequences of such a step, not now apparent, might realize the suspicions referred to; there was no necessity to commit themselves; having Christianity for their law, and God in Heaven for their protector, why should they look further. I then addressed the meeting at some length, answering in detail the various objections, and pointing out that the Governor was not pressing upon them the adoption of any new system of laws and regulations, the operation of which might be matter of doubt or suspicion. The Governor's proposal was to aid them in all and every undertaking having for its object the improvement of their condition and advancement in civilization. They had themselves started the Runanga system, and the Governor offered to help them by giving his authority to their Runangas, showing them how to conduct their proceedings, confirming laws and regulations proposed by them, and finding money to pay Magistrates, Assessors, and other officers appointed to administer those laws. Neither was the proffered aid restricted to the work of legislating and administering justice; but in establishing schools, hospitals, &c., in making roads, and, in short, in every really beneficial work which they might desire to undertake, the Governor offered to lend them a helping hand. I referred to the late critical state of the country, when a war of races seemed impending, the consequences of which would have been misery and bloodshed on both sides, and destruction to the Maori should the struggle have been prolonged; while the root of the whole quarrel lay in the fact that the Maori had not yet light enough to recognise a friend in the *Pakeha*, but was groping in the dark and mistook his friend for his enemy. The Governor's wish was that the whole island should be light, and he was therefore willing to help all who sought light, and to promote every thing that would tend to enlighten and elevate the Maori people. With reference to the land, there was no proposal to interfere with it in any way. The Runanga would deal with all land questions, and from the Runanga, who would represent the whole people, must emanate all regulations affecting territory in the district.

Te Hura, the principal Chief of the Ngatihouhiri, now stepped forward and said that he was quite satisfied to accept the Governor's system; he saw nothing in it to excite suspicion, and should it hereafter appear that they had been deceived, he could as easily renounce his connection with the Government as he now entered into it, and would not scruple to do so. Meanwhile he was willing that the thing should be tried.

I then stated that what I had to propose was, that the tribes then present should consider whether they were willing to unite with the other sections of the Ngatiawa in forming one local Runanga for