

I think that the habits of the Maories have undergone a change. They do not rise early. They are more abandoned in appearance, and they are more idle than formerly.

I gave, after last journey, to the Postmaster at Auckland, a letter from Hapurona of Waikato Heads. Hapurona complains that no notice has been taken of it. It relates to his salary for ferrying the postman over the river.

Apera Kiwi, chief of Tainui, earnestly desires that some arrangement may be made about the ferry at Whaingaroa. He says that he has been writing about it for many years.

I observed great discrepancies in the constitution of the different runangas. At Taupari, the tribe had chosen 15 representatives as a runanga; these voted, but the whole tribe joined in the debate. The Ngatitahinga formed the runanga from the entire village. At Whaingaroa they appointed 7 men, but every adult male was present. As I understand that His Excellency's views differ from my own on the subject of the constitution of the Village Runanga, I did not interfere by giving any positive directions; but suggest that the question should be left for discussion and decision at the District Runanga.

I think power should be taken to enable the Governor in Council to extend the jurisdiction of the Native Courts, over European territories of small extent situated in Native districts, if the inhabitants desire that such a step should be taken. I cannot tell otherwise how matters can be carried on in such localities, especially if there is no Resident Magistrate, or an incompetent one.

Chiefs from Aotea and Kawhia desired me to visit those places. I declined, partly because I feared approaching illness, and partly because they had not written a numerously signed letter to the Government stating their desire.

Three roads were spoken of at Runangas:—

- (1.) Waikato to Whaingaroa along the inland ranges.
- (2.) Whaingaroa to Aotea.
- (3.) Whaingaroa to Waipa.

The Natives might easily be induced to make the first, and are very anxious to make the last two, though I do not think No. 2 is of much importance. No. 3 would be of great political importance, and Ngatimaniapoto declare that they will oppose its construction. An emissary of the turbulent party at Ngauawahia got very severely handled by the Runanga at Whaingaroa. If Nero is determined to make the road, I submit that Government should support him with pecuniary assistance, and should assist him in protecting himself if attacked (which is not probable, to my mind).

Waata Kukutai is desirous of selling a piece of land for an annual charge, near Te Kia. I know no particulars of title, &c.

Tini te Rata Patiti also wishes to sell his claim over land near the same place. I think whatever his rights are, they should be investigated and settled.

I do not know how the Government proposes to remit the cash for salaries, &c., to the Waikato.

I submit that instructions should be issued, at once, about the erection of Court-houses.

In conclusion, I have to assure you that, in my opinion, the district of country from Meremere down to Whaingaroa may now be considered as organized.

It is true that the Natives will still watch narrowly the Governor's proceedings, for every Maori now has, more or less, the feeling of suspicion and distrust which always possesses a weak nature in the presence of a strong one. The greatest error in our past policy, as a policy, was the neglecting to employ Natives in war as well as in peace. Confidence is, to a great extent, re-established throughout the Lower Waikato, and that is a great step; but the conditions of success which existed so largely in 1856, 1857, and 1858, are now wanting. That favourable chance will never happen again in the history of the Maori people.

Permit me to bear my testimony to the competency and zeal of Mr. Armitage. I assure you that the Government may place perfect confidence in the efficiency of that officer.

I have, &c.,

The Honorable the
Native Minister.

F. D. FENTON.

No. 3.

REPORT FROM J. ARMITAGE, ESQ., OF THE NGATITIPA RUNANGA,

Kohanga, 6th January, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to inform you that I arrived here on the 31st ultimo, agreeably to your instructions. As you had not arrived, and the day was too boisterous to allow of any communication with Waiuku, I suggested to Waata Kukutai that the Runanga should be adjourned to Thursday, the 2nd instant, to which he assented.

On the 1st instant, I received a letter from you stating that you were detained in Auckland by sickness, and that you thought Waata had better hold his Runanga without waiting for you.

I communicated this to Waata, and he approved of it, and fixed the 2nd instant for the meeting of the Runanga.

I attended at Taupari on the 2nd instant, but the weather was so unfavourable that no one had assembled, and the Runanga was again adjourned to the following day at 10 a.m.