

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

addressed the meeting, all of them strongly in favor of the immediate establishment of Native Courts at Otaki, and the organization of the Runanga under the "Native Districts Regulation Act."

The general opinion among the loyal Natives (and in it I fully concur,) is, that when these institutions are in full operation and the advantages of better government begin to develop themselves, the Kingites will gradually be won over, and will by degrees incorporate themselves with us. Coercive measures would be at once fatal to any success. We must, step by step, regain their confidence,—taking care in the meanwhile to avert, as far as possible, a collision of parties,—give them really to feel that we are offering them, instead of empty Kingism, substantial and permanent advantages,—the "substance for the shadow," as they themselves express it,—and their ultimate return to loyalty and obedience is almost certain.

2. *Manawatu: Population about 600.*

The Villages are so far apart, and the people so scattered, that it is difficult to arrive at even an approximate estimate of the Maori population on the Manawatu River. Several hundred have lately migrated to Waikato and to Napier, and a few to Taranaki. The present population may be safely stated at not less than 600.

I held meetings at Moutoa and at Te Maire. The proposed plan of Government was well received at both places. A number of the loyal Natives agreed to put up at once a commodious *raupo* Court House, provided the Government will contribute plain doors, windows, and iron-mongery.

The bulk of the population on this river are either professed Kingites or "Kupapa" (waverers), but the loyal Natives confidently trust to the successful working of the new machinery as a sure means of reclaiming them.

3. *Rangitikei: Population about 400.*

The earnestness manifested by the Ngatiapa people at Parewanui (Rangitikei) on behalf of the new system was very cheering.

Before reaching the settlement I was met by a cordial letter of welcome. On my arrival I found the Natives already assembled. I spent several hours there and met them again by appointment on the following evening.

As a proof that Kingism is on the wane in this District I may mention the case of Hamuera and his cattle, full particulars of which I have given in another report (June 24th).

Hunia Te Hakeke having made a public confession of his folly in joining the King party, and of his anxiety to be considered, for the present, strictly neutral, I put his sincerity to the test by insisting upon immediate restitution of the cattle seized under a judgment of the King's Runanga. Hunia ultimately yielded, and Nepia Taratoa, with the other chiefs concerned in the seizure, gave their consent.

The cattle are to be restored to Hamuera, or their value paid, and the original case upon which the seizure was made will be brought before me judicially at the next sittings of the Resident Magistrate's Court, and my decision accepted by the Kingites as final.

It is obvious that a very important point has been gained. Practically, the leaders of the King's Runanga have ignored the authority of that tribunal, and have virtually surrendered themselves to British law. In this light it is viewed by the Natives themselves.

Nepia Taratoa (who is now permanently located at Matahiwi, (Rangitikei),) was very friendly. He listened with evident interest to the explanations I had to offer, and spoke to the following effect:—

"Governor Grey is my friend of former years. His words are good. He left New Zealand and darkness over-spread the people. My heart too was growing dark. But now the light shines again. I am resting between the parties. I shall not hastily consent. Commence your work and if it bear fruit I may join you."

The Ngatiapa readily consented to put up a large *raupo* Court House, subject to the usual assistance from Government; and have offered to make over to the Crown a few acres of land for a Magistrate's residence, if required.

4. *Turakina: Population about 100.*

The people here (a section of the Ngatiapa,) are unanimous and impatient for the introduction of the new system. They have already built a small Court House.

5. *Porotavhau: Population about 200.*

This is the recognised head-quarters of the King party. Their two principal Runanga houses are here; one of them is 38 feet by 23 feet, and is elaborately finished with carving and painting.

Te Hoia, the head chief, received us with feasting and every expression of good will. I may note that he expressed a strong hope that Sir George Grey would again visit the West Coast, and promised that all Ngatihua shall unite to do His Excellency honor. He frankly admitted that he and all his people had given in their adhesion to the Maori King, but at the same time expressed much satisfaction with the new "tikanga."