

6. Ohau : Population about 70.

The inhabitants of this and the neighbouring settlement (Waikawa) are ultra-kingites. Somewhat to my surprise I met with a good reception, and my proposal for a general meeting was cheerfully accepted.

Accordingly, on the 7th inst., they assembled from both settlements in the Runanga house at Ohau. They gave me a patient and attentive hearing, but met me, in reply, with a distinct and determined refusal. I fear there is little chance of influencing these natives except through Waikato. They are fully committed to the King movement, and cannot or will not draw back. But to shew that there is, after all, an under-current of good feeling and no real disaffection to the Pakeha at work, I may notice the following amusing proposal, made in all seriousness by their leading chief (Rawiri Raparuru):—

“Friend, Buller,—We welcome you, but not the words you bring. We are willing to have you but not the laws you offer us. Listen: our Runanga have deliberated long and this is their unanimous word. If you will renounce the ‘mana’ of the Queen and the ‘mana’ of the Governor, then we will receive you. You shall be our magistrate, our father, and the head of our Runanga. We will support you—all Waikato will support you!!”

7. Waikanae : Population about 200.

Here too the King party is predominant. Our meeting took place on the 9th. Wi Tako was present and listened eagerly to my explanations.

He replied in a long speech, stating fully the circumstances which led him to join the Waikato movement. He professed full confidence in the present Governor, strong friendship for the Pakeha, and the utmost satisfaction with the proposed institutions. But he frankly stated that he had given his word to Waikato and could not honorably draw back:—

“If Waikato will consent to these plans it will be good—very good. Waikato is the fountain—I am one of the streams. You may go on with your work here, stepping over the stream. Let the Governor dry up the fountain and the streams will vanish. Let the Governor be earnest in persuading Waikato to adopt these plans. Your words are pleasant—very pleasant to my ears. I shall sit quietly by—I shall not interfere with your work. Let the Governor keep softening the heart of Waikato. Tell the Governor Wi Tako has no thoughts at present—he is looking on. Listen not to the sayings at Ohau and Waikawa. They joined the King as it were yesterday: I commenced the work. Governor Grey has returned, and my heart is light. I am only waiting for Waikato.”

With these facts before us, it is obviously desirable that no time be lost in introducing the new system among our own natives in this district.

I confidently hope that as these institutions become better understood and appreciated, and—as the Maories express it—“bear fruit,” the other party will gradually be absorbed and ere long cease to exist as an obstructive agency.

I trust we may even look forward to the fine building at Porotawhao ultimately becoming our own Court House, and a place of meeting for the District Runanga.

For giving effect to the above suggestions I have the honor to recommend:—

1st. That the Government will assist in the erection of Court Houses at Manawatu and at Rangitikei by contributing plain doors, windows and any carpentering work that may be absolutely necessary.

2nd. That officers be at once appointed under the “Native Circuits Courts Act” and “Districts Regulation Act,” 1858, and apportioned (provisionally) to the several settlements as follows:—

	Assessors.	Wardens.	Kareres.
Otaki.....	3	2	6
Manawatu	2	1	4
Rangitikei.....	3	2	6
Turakina	2	1	4
Waikanae	1	0	2
	11	6	22

The expenditure on Salaries would be:—

11 Assessors at £30	£330
6 Wardens at £20	120
22 Kareres at £10	220
	£670

It will be necessary hereafter somewhat to augment the number of officers, but I am anxious, if possible, to leave room for appointments from among the King party as they may join our ranks. I do not mean that we should bribe them, or offer to buy their allegiance, but they would naturally claim to be represented in this way, and if the list were already full, there would, I apprehend, be some difficulty.