

or promising to dispose of their lands until the Runanga should meet and a system be in operation. I am able to say that the Natives quite understood the force of my arguments and agreed to my suggestions, but I am unable to say how long they may withstand the urgent demands of the Europeans.

Having settled all outstanding difficulties and obtained a full insight into the circumstances of the country, I, as the last act of my visit, summoned the Natives to a general meeting at the Pa Whakaairo, about eight miles from Napier. All the leading men of the neighbourhood, those from Te Aute, and representatives from Porangahau and other places, were present. The Chiefs Renata and Tareha, who reside at the pah, received me and those with me with liberal hospitality. At the meeting I was first asked to explain the intentions of the Government with respect to the Maori King and to the disputed block of land at Waitara. I explained these matters fully, and they expressed their full consent in both cases. I then enlarged upon your Excellency's proposals for their government, shewing the advantages which they would gain and the corresponding liabilities which they would lie under in accepting the offer. Their answer was plain. They would willingly accept the plan proposed; indeed they were most anxious to see it at work, having hoped for something of the kind for at least two years; but they made one reservation. They had certain land-purchase disputes yet unsettled, disputes of the same kind with that which commenced the war at Taranaki. They had been in expectation since that war began that the Governor would use similar means to settle the disputes with them; that is, would employ force. The plan now proposed for settling the Waitara dispute was a very good one; they only wished that before attempting to introduce a system which must be carried out amicably that the land-purchase disputes between themselves and the Government should first be settled by the same means. To this most reasonable request I expressed my full assent.

I now most earnestly recommend that immediate steps be taken to carry on the work which has been begun, and which could not have been commenced but upon the assurance that it would be proceeded with.

I have detailed certain minor facts and suggestions in a separate paper for the information of the Civil Commissioner in whose hands the administration of Native affairs in Hawke's Bay may for the future be placed.

I have, &c.,

CROSBIE WARD.

His Excellency Sir George Grey,
&c., &c., &c.

Enclosure 4 in No. 1.

SUGGESTIONS BY THE HON. C. WARD FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE CIVIL COMMISSIONER.

Napier, 18th January, 1862.

I desire to record, for the benefit of the Civil Commissioner who may be appointed to take charge of the Native District of Hawke's Bay, some facts and suggestions which appear to me of great importance.

The Natives, at a meeting held at Pa Whakaairo, on the 16th instant, where were present all the principal men of this part of the district, with representatives from Te Aute and Porangahau, declared their willingness to accept the Governor's proposals for their better government; but stipulated that, first of all, every disputed question of boundary between the European and Native lands should be investigated and settled. I conceive this course to be not only just, but highly politic; and therefore point it out as the first step to be taken on entering upon the management of Native affairs in the district. In making the investigation it will be unnecessary for the Commissioner, at least if he have been in no way mixed up with land purchase operations, to associate any body with himself in the investigation. The Natives will be fully satisfied with the authority which he will represent, and will only ask that their claims may be fully heard and justly judged. A few cases of doubted boundary exist in this district, which the Natives consider of great importance; so great, indeed, as to regard them as probable causes for war, equally with the block sold by Teira, at the Waitara in Taranaki. They express a fear that their claim to these lands may be disregarded by the Government, whom they accuse of having bought them carelessly from men who had no sufficient right to sell. I have no doubt that in all such cases ample evidence can be adduced to satisfy, one way or other, even an Englishman unacquainted beforehand with Native tenure.

The next step of importance to be taken is the settlement of land disputes amongst themselves. This is comparatively an easy work, being complicated only in cases where a chief protects and supports each party of claimants; here mutual jealousy springs up to render mutual dealings difficult. The course which has hitherto proved successful is to induce the chiefs on each side to withdraw, and to permit the minor claimants themselves to meet and ascertain and settle their conflicting claims, which they will generally do with much facility. The course of the Government in these cases will be very simple; its mere announcement has proved very successful already with Te Hapuku. The Government should permit the pastoral occupation of all lands, where there is no dispute about title, as soon as the system proposed is in operation: but they should not permit any occupation of disputed lands. This refusal will be of importance, and will be practicable when all other questions are settled and law is introduced. It will have the effect of rendering all disputed land profitless to either party; the inducement to quarrel will be withdrawn, and an inducement to settle the quarrel substituted, that the profit of the land may be forthcoming.