

And as it is, I hardly know what I can say on the subject, in addition to what I have observed in the many Reports which I have forwarded to the Government during the past 2½ years, from the several Districts in which I have been travelling. But as you say that it is rather a summary of information which is required at present, I will proceed, as directly as possible, to note down a few observations on the various subjects mentioned in your Circular, with special reference to the Districts which I visited. Of course I shall say nothing but what has come under my own knowledge.

When I first visited the Thames and the Bay of Plenty in the winter of 1859, I found the people very wishful that a very regular system of Law, (not entirely English, but one applicable to their Native state), should be administered amongst them by a European Magistrate, assisted by Assessors and Runangas. The members of the Runanga are chosen, or rather *karangatia* by a few leading men, very similar to the selection of our own Committees; and thus has risen up in every village a kind of little oligarchy, comprised only of chief men, by whom decisions and penalties of the greatest injustice are sometimes inflicted on their meaner brethern, but always under the shelter of the term "runanga." It is a kind of standing village court, to which all cases, formerly settled by the *komiti*, are submitted; it is perfectly exclusive in its composition: in many cases the members are paid from fines inflicted, which are therefore increased beyond what is just; and seldom or ever are any charges entertained by them against chief men, except in the case of adultery. In many places, when left to itself, the Maori Runanga acts in so inquisitorial a manner, as to be a source of great terror and vexation to the people; especially by its constant interference with the various relations of private life, and by its creating causes of offence where it cannot find them.

If this body were differently constituted, and placed under the superintendence of a judicious Magistrate, it would be of essential use in the government of the Natives; nor indeed will they ever be governed entirely without it. And thus, instead of being left, as at present, a system of mere talk and idleness as to its members, and a source of constant annoyance and mischief to every one else, it would be turned into an engine of great civilizing power, whether for the correction of offences, or, (which is of much more importance), for the continuous advancement of the condition of the people. I have been thus lengthy in my remarks on the Runanga, because it is considered of the greatest importance, by the Chiefs, in every part of the island, and because it is from this aristocracy that Maori kingism derives its greatest support.

At the time alluded to, there was scarcely a kingite in Rotorua or the Bay of Plenty; but now, through the incessant endeavours of Tamehana and other agents from Waikato, the great body of the people, as far as the Kaha, are known to be agreeable to the scheme. The same remark will, I believe, apply to Ahuriri; where the Chiefs and young men expressed to me, with the greatest boldness, their adhesion to the Maori king, whose instructions they had resolved to obey whether for peace or war. Since then they have adopted a more moderate tone in public, as also at Wairarapa; but whether their opinions are altered, is perhaps questionable.

With many Natives the idea of kingism is of a very vague and indefinite character, meaning sometimes one thing, and sometimes another; but in some districts, especially in Waikato, it has at length assumed proportions of a very dangerous character, and comprehends nothing less than an entire abnegation of the Queen's supremacy, and the assertion of their political independence. They desire the establishment of some more regular system of law, but then they contend that it must be administered solely by themselves, to the exclusion of all European Magistrates; and this principle they wish to extend even to the Pakehas who dwell in their midst, so that we may have no claim to interfere within the bounds of their territory. The prayer for the Queen has been exchanged for one for their king; and where the former is continued by any of the Teachers, many of them have recently resolved to shew their disapprobation, by sitting up in their places and opening their eyes. Her Majesty's sway in this country is generally spoken of with great contumely, and Her Majesty's Government reproached as being imbecile in itself, and either useless or injurious to them. The benefits and favours and philanthropy of the past have been forgotten, and a sullen determination adopted to prevent, if possible, any further intermixture of race for the future.

Of course, while labouring under such morbid feelings of almost unaccountable dislike, it is impossible to disbelieve in the sincerity of their wish to throw off what they call the "foreigner's yoke," and by stopping the sale of land to impede the colonization of the country. The general desire, so far as I have observed, is not for any direct system of purchase, so much as that no land may be purchased at all; and very seldom have I ever heard them complain (except when prompted by others), either of our mode of acquisition, or of the amount of purchase money which they have received. Not having heard these things amongst themselves for so many years, it seems strange to me that such a complaint should now be raised, and that so many Europeans should join in it. At any rate, it can be no real cause of Maori-kingism, for the Waikatos as yet have sold none of their land, nor have they any desire to do so in any manner, or for any price whatever. In some of the other districts, the chiefs are not only willing but determined to lease their waste lands, whether legally or not; and many of the stockholders are equally determined to enter into the contract.

The remarkable want of success which has attended our arms at Taranaki, and which has been construed by the Natives into failure, has had a most deplorable effect on the minds and conduct of the people generally. The entire manner in which the war has been conducted from the first, and the partial successes which they have gained, together with their continued possession of much plunder, both in Ngatiruanui and Waikato, has led to the most inflated views of their own vast superiority over any power that has been, or can be, brought against them. And so long as this feeling keeps such strong possession of their minds, it is difficult to imagine how they will peaceably submit to the operation of any law or government which would impose the least restraint upon their actions. But, considering all things, I think that the un-belligerent Natives are rather to be pitied than blamed, for