

It is by the desire of the Governor and his Council, that this assembly has been convened and set up as a Runanga, that we may make regulations by which the law can be carried out by every one in this district.

For many years past you have urged the Government to give you laws like those of the English, that you might be enabled to do that which is right.

You are quite sensible of the errors of some of your Maori usages. One thing which has weakened (or disheartened) you in your labours was the thought, that if you possessed property, some excuse would be found by others whereby you would be robbed of all your gains.

It is on account of this practice that the Maori cannot equal the Englishman, for he possesses no law (which can act) as a guardian to his property.

Many of the thoughts (or opinions expressed) at your Maori Runangas were very excellent, but those good ideas were completely lost for want of unity in the work.

If you did agree on perceiving a good proposition, yet because this regulation was neither made public nor written (nor recorded), it was never carried out, being hidden (or forgotten).

Now all that is done at this Runanga will be written, and, if the Governor and his Council consent, will be printed, so that being a fixed record, men may learn, and thus all of this district will be enabled to fulfil the laws.

Another thing causing difficulties among you has been the want of a leader (for carrying out) these regulations. According to your Maori usages every man was an adjudicator or magistrate, and if any man did evil you did not quietly judge him for his fault, but took *tauas* (or fighting men) to strip his village—thus casting the sin of one man upon many, robbing all, whether orphans, widows, or sick people, distressing all by this system of plunder. It is by this means that the Maori race is kept in poverty. Friends, now will be the time of your prosperity if you carry out the Governor's new scheme which has been given to us, because it is for this Runanga to devise measures (or laws) for the magistrates or assessors to lead in the Courts. It is for the wardens (or guardians) and the heralds (or constables) to preserve peace, so that order may be kept throughout the district.

Perhaps you have not forgotten your loving friend Mr. Marsden? You urged him to give you laws that evil might cease; but he replied that he was a minister, and had other work to do, which was, to teach the laws of God and make known the Gospel.

You also urged your other missionary friends to give you laws, but the answer they returned was the same as Mr. Marsden's. After this you prayed to the British Government to devise laws for you. This was long before the Government arrived in this island; but on account of suspicions and a want of unity among your chiefs, this thing could not be accomplished. Then when the Government came to this island, you looked cautiously, and you had no confidence in the good feelings of the English towards you. Other things which added to the difficulty were the divisions (or wars) among yourselves, and then the desire for British laws ceased.

At this time you are seeking for good regulations, and the Governor and his Council are desirous that you should work together, in order to devise such measures as will enable the Maori people to climb upward in the good path, that our laws may be alike, so that we may become one nation, and that the English and the Maori may dwell together in tranquillity.

This is the reason why this assembly is called together by the Governor and set up to be a Runanga, in order to lay down good laws. Friends, let us labour as one with the Government in this good work, let all our thoughts pull one way and thus throw all our strength together. Let us fulfil that proverb of the English, "A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether."

How would the plough speed if one ox was yoked in front and the other behind, thus pulling (in opposite directions)?—the plough would stand still upon the ground. What would become of the swiftness of the canoe if some determined to paddle backwards while the rest pulled forwards?—the canoe would lie helpless upon the ocean. Our labour will be in vain and our canoe will float helplessly if our thoughts are not agreed about this great work we have to do. Let us not be gloomy because of our ignorance respecting this new work. The child does not arrive at manhood in one day; nor does a sapling become a large tree within a week. I know that there are many rules in this new work which will not be quite clear to you at first, but let us persevere. It was by perseverance that you learned to read and write. Many things are done easily by you now which were looked upon ignorantly (or as great difficulties) before. You have seen the ordination of Maori clergymen, and your ears have listened to the words of the Gospel preached to you by them. Perhaps hereafter some of you or your children will speak in the English House of Assembly; that is, if you study the English language. You are able (or equal) to do this. You must strive to have your children taught the English language, that they may by that means learn all the good knowledge of the English.

I will now proceed to place before the Runanga an outline of the business of the session.

1. In the first place I shall lay upon the table for your consideration and approval the rules and standing orders for the guidance of the Runanga.

2. The rules by which it is proposed to organize or constitute this district will require the most attentive consideration of the Runanga, for when fully settled and approved of by the Governor and the Runanga, will form the basis of all future proceedings.

I shall bring under the notice of the Runanga the following subjects, namely:—

1. The number of chiefs which are to constitute the District Runanga. Ten have already been appointed by the Governor and Council. Two wardens are required for the Hundreds of Waimate and Kororareka.

2. The Runanga will proceed to nominate the above officers for the approval of the Governor.

3. The Runanga will proceed to nominate 20 Kareies in the following order:—7 for Hundred of Hokianga, 9 for Hundred of Waimate, 4 for Hundred of Kororareka.