

the hands of the Natives, but, in fairness to the late owners, the tribe should not be allowed to leave the district except under mutual arrangement. If the Government would become security for them, there would not, I apprehend, be any difficulty in their returning home with their vessels and working out the balance there, reasonable time being allowed them for its payment.

In the case of the "Mavis" however, unless the Government can assist the Ngatipikiao with an immediate loan of £400 (to meet the present balance), I see no prospect of their getting away for at least another two years. It would be manifestly unjust to compel their immediate return at so great a sacrifice to themselves, as the forfeiture of all their past earnings.

Added to these difficulties, the Arawa Natives are very much in debt to the storekeepers here and at Mangapai, Eruera's party alone (at Otaika) admit debts to the amount of £130.

I confess I have very little sympathy for these storekeepers; it is notorious that in dealing with Natives they charge considerably more than to Europeans (sometimes 100 per cent) in order, as they plead, to cover the great risk of "bad debts." Natives are very improvident, and nothing is easier than to coax them into buying goods to almost any extent, provided the payment be indefinitely deferred: while on the other hand, they are so utterly at fault as to value,—that it is equally easy to impose upon them.

Surely the Government is not bound to assist in the recovery of these iniquitous debts? There are, of course, exceptions, but I submit that, in any case it is unreasonable to suppose that the Governor will allow his plans for carrying out the new system of Government to be thwarted or interfered with, simply because a few Europeans have been reckless enough to give these Natives unlimited credit, especially as it was understood that they were to leave the district finally in December last: rather let the storekeepers take their chance of being paid in remittances from Rotorua, for (to meet them on their own ground), this would only be one of the additional risks which their excessive charges are professedly intended to cover.

As to means of transit—if some arrangement could be made for securing to the Natives immediate possession of these vessels, they would at once be available for the purpose without any further outlay on the part of the Government. Eruera Te Paimoe (a Ngatiwhakane chief), speaking on behalf of his own hapu, told me that there would be unwillingness on their part to repay the Government in land for any assistance they may obtain. Awaiting further instructions,

I have, &c.,

WALTER BULLER, R.M.,

Visiting Whangarei.

Henry Halse, Esq., R.M.,
Acting Native Secretary,
Auckland.

No. 17.

MR. BULLER TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

Whangarei, April 5th, 1862.

SIR,—

Having just returned from a semi-official trip to the Wairoa River, I think it right to acquaint the Governor of the state of feeling among the Wairoa and Kaipara Natives, in reference to His Excellency's contemplated visit.

Although the late disagreement between Te Tirarau and Paikea has been amicably settled, there is still much bitterness of feeling and mutual jealousy between them. Any special attention shewn by His Excellency to Paikea would estrange Te Tirarau, and *vice versa*. The Uriohau people refuse to meet the Governor, if he should come to them by way of Whangarei; and the Parawhau are equally urgent that His Excellency should give them the first audience.

Te Tirarau is anxious that the Governor should come first to Whangarei, and meet his people at Maungatapere (Walton's homestead), and then, returning to Auckland, make a second trip to meet the Kaipara and Oruawharo Natives (*i.e.*, Ngatiwhatua and Uriohau tribes). His own words to me were to the following effect:—"If the Governor should begin his new system with Te Uriohau, let it end there. He and Paikea may work out their own *tikanga*; I shall remain at a distance."

I represented to him that probably His Excellency's plans were matured, and could not be altered; also, that the Governor's time was too valuable to allow of needless journeys, simply to humour the caprice of individual Chiefs. He at length assented to this, and said that he would hold a meeting at Mangawhare (Atkin's station), where Parore's people are temporarily located, and then allow him to bring His Excellency up the Wairoa river, in his own boat, to Mareikura, or to Mangakahia, where another *hui* should take place.

He seemed anxious that the Governor should visit Mangakahia, as it might prove the occasion of settling a long standing quarrel between himself and Matiu Te Aranui. But, if His Excellency be pressed for time, Matiu would (Tirarau says) respond to an invitation to meet him at Mareikura.

From Mangakahia to Whangarei, the distance overland is fifteen miles, and the road very rough. Tirarau would provide His Excellency's party there with horses, or would bring them down again in his boat to the Kaipara.

If the Governor can so manage it, the plan of two separate visits would certainly be the best, and would give very general satisfaction. The Wairoa Natives (from Mangawhare upwards) would, if