

*F. E. Manning, Esq.*—Europeans also not being in numbers sufficient to cause alarm to the Natives, the settlers had much moral influence over them, which influence was, as may be supposed, from the otherwise defenceless position of the settlers, uniformly exercised for the preservation of peace.

It is, without doubt, that during the war about one-third of the northern Natives were sympathisers with the southern rebels, and would have taken arms against the Government had they not been overawed by the majority, who held to a contrary line of policy. These disloyal Natives were precisely those tribes who were from their local position, and other circumstances, the least able to improve their material condition by a commercial or industrial connection with the European settlers, I mention this fact as noteworthy, but the disaffected Natives had doubtless other and stronger reasons for wishing to oppose or overthrow the European Government. It is to be understood that when I speak of "loyal" Natives in the North I make use of the word loyal only to distinguish the party who were unwilling to take arms against us, or who would, if encouraged to do so, have taken arms on our side, because their course was not dictated by loyalty to the Crown or Government, but was the result of a studied policy. They believed that in the event of the Europeans being successful in the war with the southern rebels, they (the northern Natives) would have less to fear from the Europeans than they would from their own countrymen of the South, supposing they should be successful and conquer the whites, the northern Natives being conscious that, at a time not far distant, they had, under Hongi and other chiefs, ravaged the countries of almost every southern tribe, and that, in consequence, they could put no trust in professions of friendship and alliance made to them by the southern Natives, and feared that if the Europeans were conquered they themselves might be the next attacked.

The feeling of the great majority of the Natives to the north of Auckland, at the present time, is not unfriendly to the settlers or to the Government, and is even more averse to the idea of a war with us than when the conflict with the southern rebels commenced; it is, however, to be noted, that they do not at all fear the power of the Government sufficiently to prevent them from taking arms unhesitatingly in any question which they would consider of sufficient importance; such, for instance, as an encroachment, real or supposed, on their territorial rights; or a systematic attempt, by us to enforce, in every case, the British criminal law. They are fully supplied with arms of a better description than the southern Natives have, and have also large stores of ammunition, and also facilities for procuring more whenever they require it, notwithstanding the law to the contrary, the American whaling vessels resorting to the northern ports being always ready to supply any quantity which the Natives can find ready money to pay for. To entirely put an end to this illicit traffic would be very difficult, if not impossible; there is however, at present, not much done in this illegal commerce, the Natives being so well supplied that there is little or no demand for arms or ammunition at the present time.

The whole country, north of Auckland, can muster something about two thousand men, I think, not more; they are, however, the best armed, and most warlike people in New Zealand. The population is, as a whole, on the decrease, though much less rapidly than was the case from twenty to thirty-five or forty years back. In one district (Hokianga) the decrease was checked, and an increase certainly apparent about fifteen years ago, for some four or five years; the population now in that district is about stationary, or, if anything, slightly tending to increase; but, as a whole, the population seems to have a tendency to a continual decrease, which will not be checked but by a more regular and civilized mode of life, and the adoption by the Natives of more provident habits; but if this change, of which there are some fresh indications visible in the North, does not take place generally before a certain point of decrease has been reached, the ultimate extinction of the race is certain.

The southern Natives who have been in conflict with us in the war have suffered terribly, more so than I think is generally supposed; and I think they feel it deeply, sufficiently so, I am convinced, to have caused them to lose all hope of conquering the European inhabitants of the country, but not the hope of being able to maintain themselves as an independent people capable of, from time to time, inflicting injury on us, and possibly obliging us to restore some, at least, of the lands they have lost in the war.

My hope, therefore, for the establishment of a permanent peace is greater than my expectation of seeing it established for a considerable time.

I have no doubt that the Natives have been told that in case of another serious outbreak no further military assistance would be afforded us from England; but this is so very different from what the Maori idea of what the conduct of the Parent State should and would be; and, looking also as they do, to the actual fact that a large army was sent to our assistance, and kept in the Colony as long as that assistance was absolutely necessary, I think the Natives do not believe we would be left alone to deal with them in a second struggle. Should they eventually become of a different opinion, it would seriously diminish the chances of peace being established securely for several years; and it is certain that by a change in their tactics, which the Natives are quite capable of adopting, they might, with half their former numbers, inflict as much or more loss upon the Colony than they have already done.

As to the acts of the war itself, the Natives know that for years before it commenced they had themselves determined upon war, and that the long series of aggressions gradually increasing in seriousness, which preceded the actual commencement of hostilities, or open warfare, were deliberately planned and perpetrated with the set purpose of wearing out our patience and causing us to shed the first blood, thereby enabling them to throw the blame of commencing the war on us, and also to call with more certainty of success on those sections of the Maori people who were, up to that time, undecided as to what course they should take.

No possible action or line of policy by our Government could have had the slightest effect whatever in averting this war; the Natives were determined to try their strength with us, and do not in reality blame us for having inflicted loss and suffering on them, but are surprised, indeed, to think that we did not treat them worse than we have done upon certain occasions when we could have done so. They will, however, not the less avail themselves of any opportunity which may seem to offer