

belief in witchcraft, and the arts of divination; of course there are many exceptions to this, and there is a remarkable freedom amongst the Natives from crime of a serious nature, such as murder, assaults, burglaries, larcenies, &c., and taking everything into consideration the few times they are visited either by a minister or magistrate, the wonder is that they are so well behaved as they are, for their interests are after all greatly neglected, there being no person appointed specially to look after their wants and study their welfare and happiness.

*D. S. Durie, Esq.—
continued.*

Wanganui, 10th March, 1868.

D. S. DURIE,
Resident Magistrate, Wanganui.

No. 12.

T A R A N A K I.

REPORT from R. PARRIS, Esq., Civil Commissioner, Taranaki.

THE history of many years past being inseparably connected with the present state of the relations of the two races, I feel it would be difficult to explain clearly the present state of feeling of the Natives, without referring briefly to the time when the first systematic opposition to the progress of the colonization of the country commenced, from which may be traced all the misery and fiery trials to which the Native race has been subjected from that time.

In 1853-54 two runanga (council) houses were built in the Ngatiruanui District, one a very large one, called Taiporohenui, and the other of less dimensions, called Kumeamai, both of which names have a significant meaning, which foreshadowed disaffection to the established Government of the country, and a determination to oppose its further acquisition of territory.

The tribes who have suffered most from its consequences declare that it originated with the Ngatiraukawas, at Otaki, who disseminated their views amongst other tribes which led to the erection of the above-mentioned houses, in which large meetings of different tribes were held, and a compact entered into to oppose the surrender of any more land to Government. The first fruits of that combination were exhibited in this Province, in August, 1854, when the chief, Rawiri Waiaua, an assessor, and four of his followers, were massacred, and several others wounded, for attempting to define the boundaries of a small piece of land they wished to sell to the Government. This outrage led to the formation of two parties, bitterly opposed to each other, and who were for five years carrying on an internecine war in this district, a condition of affairs most embarrassing to the Government, inasmuch as public feeling was loud in declaring that Government ought to interfere and put a stop to a state of things which was considered to be a disgrace to the country; an interference from which the Government was only justified in refraining on the ground of insufficient strength to control the Native race.

This anarchical state of things without doubt very materially strengthened a previously conceived idea of setting up a Maori king, and establishing a distinct nationality. The weakness of the Government, as unavoidably exhibited in its non-interference in the quarrels of the Native race, was taken advantage of by the prime movers in the Maori King cause. They said: "The Government from England is not able to govern us, we must govern ourselves." Many who were considered to be good authorities in Native matters ridiculed the proposal of a Maori kingship, and gave it as their opinion that the want of unity among the tribes would effect its downfall, without any interference on the part of the Government. The work nevertheless progressed, and a code of Maori national flags began to be paraded over what was declared to be territory of the Maori king, upon which the European Courts were to have no authority. The lines of demarcation which were declared having left but a very small portion of the Northern Island to be governed by the established Government from England, its authority soon began to be defied, and to the astonishment of all, proposals were made to expel all missionaries and Europeans from the king's territories.

During several years of active preparation to exalt one of their own race as their king, the Natives were equally active in acquiring arms and ammunition; and at the time of the passing of the Act entirely prohibiting the sale of warlike stores to the Native race they had stored up immense quantities. As proof of which I presume nothing more is required to be adduced than the fact that for eight years they have been able to resist military operations, which for a long time were carried on very actively, and during which very large quantities of ammunition must have been expended on both sides.

In 1859-60 the Government began to be convinced that the Maori King movement was one which must not be regarded lightly, and that unless the authority and power assumed under it could be controlled and guided, the only way of avoiding a serious collision between the races would be to abandon the country. At this time the European settlement of New Plymouth was very limited, and the want of room for increasing herds and flocks very seriously felt, which was the cause of strong appeals from the settlers to the Government for more land—appeals in which they were encouraged by the fact that certain Natives were offering land for sale to the Government, of which they could make no possible use themselves. A section of the Ngatiruanui tribe had offered to sell a very fine block of land between the Patea and Tangahoe Rivers, and a section of the Ngatiawas had offered a small block at Waitara. This latter offer the Government decided to entertain, not from its importance as an acquisition of territory, the block containing only about eight hundred acres, but because the case was one in which the Government felt itself called upon to assert its authority, in opposition to that of the land league and the Maori king.

The King Natives attempted to erect a king's flagstaff upon this last-named piece of land; in this they were opposed by the loyal Natives, and there was every probability of blood being shed over the question, and of a renewal of the disgraceful scenes of conflict which for five years had been enacted in the district. The Governor came himself with a detachment of troops and took possession of the land, and did all he could to avert a collision by exercising the greatest forbearance under very trying circumstances, even though the Natives threw up earthworks to cut off communication between Waitara and New Plymouth, and menaced the Government in other ways.

This state of things soon brought into action all the organized plans of the King movement;