

No. 36.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir G. F. BOWEN, G.C.M.G., to His
Grace the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.

(No. 22.)

MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, Wellington,
17th March, 1868.

Enclosure 1.

Enclosure 2.

In continuation of my previous Despatches respecting the present condition of the Maoris, I have the honor to transmit herewith a map, showing the distribution of the several Native tribes in New Zealand. With trifling exceptions, they are all resident in the Northern Island. I annex a nominal list of these clans, and of the principal chiefs, together with a statement of the estimated number of each tribe at the present time, and of its attitude, whether loyal or hostile to the Government, with other explanatory remarks.

2. These documents have been carefully prepared at my request in the department of the Native Minister, by officers of great experience in Maori affairs. On my arrival here, I found that no full or accurate documents of this kind were on record. And yet it is obvious that without such aid no accurate knowledge can be acquired, and no adequate opinion can be formed on the state of New Zealand, especially in England,—at the distance of half the circumference of the globe.

3. It will be seen that the lands confiscated some years ago for rebellion are estimated in the aggregate at nearly three millions five hundred thousand acres; but that a large portion of this territory has been already restored to the former owners, on their submission, while another large portion has been appropriated as compensation for the services of friendly Natives.

4. The titles to certain lands on the East Coast of the Northern Island have been long in dispute, and are now under investigation before the proper legal tribunal, in pursuance of Acts passed by the New Zealand Parliament in 1866 and 1867. I am informed that it is probable that in a majority of cases, the present holders will be confirmed in possession of the lands which they now occupy.

5. It will be perceived that the total Maori population is estimated now, in 1868, at 38,517; of which number all except from 1,500 to 2,000 reside in the Northern Island. Ten years ago, in 1858, a Government census returned the total Maori population at 56,049; twenty years ago, in 1848, the Maoris were estimated at about 100,000.

The causes which have contributed to produce this rapid and deplorable decay have been discussed at length by several writers of ability and local experience. I would refer more particularly to the works of Mr. Fox, formerly Prime Minister of this Colony: and of Dr. A. S. Thompson, who was resident in New Zealand for many years as surgeon to the 58th Regiment. Mr. Fox shows that the gradual disappearance of the Maoris is not to be attributed in any large degree, to their intercourse with Europeans; for “that, for the most part, has “led to the adoption of better food, better dwellings, better general habits of “life.” “The one great cause has been, and is, their utter disregard of all “thoes social and sanitary conditions which are essential to the continuing vitality “of the human race. This cause was in existence long before there was a “European in the islands, and there is little doubt that the race was on the “decrease when Cook first landed there.” Dr. Thompson observes: “The “extinction of aboriginal races has been often caused by evil treatment. The “hands of the early settlers in America, the West Indies, Tasmania, Australia, “and Africa, are not clean from this imputation; but, as far as the story of New “Zealand has yet been unrolled, the pioneers of civilization, and the majority of “English, Irish, and Scotch settlers in the islands have, with some few exceptions, “acted towards the Natives in a spirit of Christianity unknown to the Saxon “colonists in Ireland, the Norman invaders of England, or the Spanish con- “querors of America.”

7. It is to be hoped that the general restoration of peace and the prohibition of inter-tribal wars; the gradual individualization of property in land now held in common; the progress of trade and friendly intercourse between the European settlers and the Maoris; the increasing use of animal food and wheaten flour;