

THE NEW ZEALAND COMPANY'S NATIVE RESERVES.

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CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCING THE COMPANY AND ITS NATIVE POLICY.

1. THE IDEALS OF EDWARD GIBBON WAKEFIELD.

It is necessary for the clear understanding of the origin and history of Native reserves and reserved "tenths" to turn back for a brief space to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the first attempts were made to colonize New Zealand. Prior to 1826 New Zealand was frequented, as regards the European race, by two classes of immigrants—the missionaries, who began their operations in 1814 under Samuel Marsden, and the wandering settlers, chiefly deserters from whaling-ships and escaped convicts from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), who made their homes on scattered spots among the Maori tribes.

The first attempt to colonize New Zealand occurred in the year 1825, when the first New Zealand Company⁽¹⁾, having amongst its members Lord Durham, Colonel Torrens, and Russell Ellice, was formed in London. This Company despatched two vessels to New Zealand, and bought lands at the mouth of the Thames and at Hokianga, but was forced to abandon its plan for want of the promised means of protection. The lands acquired subsequently became the property of the New Zealand Company of 1839.

The third decade of the last century was a time of depression for Great Britain. The high price of grain, due to the Corn Laws, was not only causing much suffering among the poorer classes, but was injuring trade. A vigorous oversea policy was most needed to provide for the surplus population and to relieve the distress, which was widespread; but although large sums had been voted to assist emigration very little had been achieved beyond putting into practice schemes for settling paupers in Canada and in other colonies. Politicians were busy with matters of parliamentary reform, and the colonial question was usually considered in relation to the convict question. Those great colonizing days of the Pilgrim Fathers were almost forgotten.

In the year 1829 the subject of colonization was revived by a new school of thinkers and writers, foremost among whom was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who in his "Letter from Sydney," published 1829, pointed to the absence of any attempt to direct colonial enterprise on scientific principles. He proposed to remedy this state of things by the sale of land in small quantities, at a sufficient price, and the employment of the proceeds as a fund for promoting emigration.

In 1830 Wakefield founded the colonization society which had for its object the development of the Wakefield theory on systematic colonization. Associated with him were John Stuart Mill, Charles Buller, Sir William Molesworth, and other reformers, and publicity was given to their aims by Rintoul, of the *Spectator*. To Wakefield was due the chief merit in restoring Britain's colonial policy.

"He saw, and made the commonplace people about him see, that colonization was a national work worthy of system, attention, and the best energies of England. The empty territories of the Empire were no longer to be treated only as gaols for convicts, fields for negro slavery, or even as asylums for the persecuted or refuges for the bankrupt and the social failures of the Mother-country. To Wakefield the word "colony" conveyed something more than a backyard into which slovenly Britain could throw human rubbish, careless of its fate so long as it might be out of sight. His advocacy revived 'Ships, Colonies, Commerce!' as England's motto."⁽²⁾

The society's activities were directed principally to South Australian affairs, but in 1836 Wakefield's attention was turned towards New Zealand as a desirable field for colonization.

In 1837 the New Zealand Association was formed in London, which had among its members Mr. Francis Baring, M.P.; John Lambton (afterwards Earl of Durham); Mr. William Hutt, M.P.; and Sir William Molesworth, M.P. The aim of the Association was to colonize New Zealand in a manner which would prove beneficial to the Native inhabitants as well as to the settlers, and with this end in view a charter was solicited from the British Government. The moving spirit of the enterprise was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who in his evidence before the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons in 1840 to inquire into the statements contained in the petition of merchants, bankers, and shipowners of the City of London respecting the colonization of New Zealand⁽³⁾ explained that the Association was formed for the purpose of obtaining, if possible, from Parliament some regulation both for the colonization and the government of the islands, to take the place of the irregular practices which were then on foot. At first the Imperial Government was inclined to favour the Association, but later difficulties arose. The Church Missionary Society, which had attained to a position of great influence, was strongly opposed to the Association and its aims, and among the lay members on its committee was Sir James Stephen, Under-Secretary for the Colonies. Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, no doubt influenced by the Society, raised objections to the plans of the Association, but finally agreed to the granting of a charter, provided its members would form themselves into a joint-stock company having a monetary interest in the venture. This condition was not acceptable to the

(1) New Zealand Company's First Report, 14th May, 1840.

(2) "The Long White Cloud," 3rd ed., by W. P. Reeves.

(3) House of Commons Report on New Zealand, 1840.