

“ Year 1857, February 21.

“ To all Waikato.

“ This is the agreement of Ngatihaua for Potatau to be King of New Zealand.

FRIENDS,—Our eagerness is great that Potatau should be constituted this year. Do not procrastinate. Hasten the assembling of the Councils. Hasten the establishment of the arrangement, and when it is completed the documents will be collected, and a day will be named when he will be instituted. Be quick. Write to the remote tribes that they may hear.

“ From

“ WILLIAM TARAPIPIPI,

“ And all Ngatihaua:

“ To Waikato, Kereihi, Pukewhau, Harapata, Tomo, Ruihana, Waata Tengatete.

“ Use dispatch.”*

Tarapiripi, the writer of this despatch, is better known by his English name of Thompson. He is a magistrate appointed by Government, and chief of the tribe Ngatihaua. This tribe was the most famous in the old fighting days for enterprise and resolution, and still, from its numbers and the extent of its conquests, possesses more influence perhaps than any other single clan. It inhabits the country between the Thames and the Horotiu, and has several villages on the Waipa plains.

Copies of this letter have been sent to every eminent chief in the district. The answers, I believe, are generally unfavourable to the writer's views, though several chiefs have expressed themselves as anxious to cooperate with him. The grounds upon which the dissentients have formed their opinions, are such as to cause me to infer that the Maoris perfectly understand the bearings and the consequences of the act proposed for their sanction. They are of opinion that the appointment of a King would be a matter of offence to the Queen and to the Europeans generally—that, if appointed, Potatau would have no funds, either to support his own dignity, or to pay his officers—that they could furnish no men of sufficient education and intelligence to act as his secretaries—and that he himself is perfectly incompetent to discharge the duties of the proposed office—that the use of the term “ King of New Zealand” is futile and injudicious, inasmuch as although the tribes in the South had consented to recognize Potatau as their lord, yet the Northern tribes, the proud and victorious Ngapuhi, would never submit to the authority of a man who had often fled before them, but would on the contrary be highly irritated at any such proposal—that, therefore, at the most, Potatau could only be King of Waikato; and that, in fine, a union founded on a scheme of this nature, would not be strength, but, on the contrary, a source of weakness. I believe that Potatau himself, *ostensibly*, affords no countenance to these proceedings of Ngatihaua, but I place little importance on this fact, for, if the public feeling plainly demanded such a step as that sought by the agitators, and Potatau declined the office, they would, according to their national custom, immediately select some one else.

It does not seem then that this project requires from me any further notice, and I will therefore merely remark that the whole design, instead of being viewed as a treasonable act demonstrative of infidelity to the Crown, should be regarded simply as a crude expedient devised by a body of ignorant men who, feeling discontented and unhappy at their position and prospects, have caught at the first plan which suggested any possibility of relief. At the same time, I submit, that the wise politician omits no opportunity of ascertaining from events however trifling, the state of the public mind, and endeavours, in the education of a barbarian race, to be rather before than behind the necessity of the day:—he watches events, as the pilot watches the straw. To treat with supercilious contempt a movement in which many thousand reflecting minds are engaged, and for the objects of which as many active bodies are disposable, is scarcely the part of a prudent statesman. If dissatisfaction at some real or imaginary present evil, or desire for some possible future good, has excited discontent, or inflamed uneasiness in the minds of a large body of men, an accidental* occurrence, or the guile of one individual, may convert an idea into a fact, and exhibit the development of a completed organization, where common observers merely perceived an impossible phantasm. That Ngatihau, Ngatitoto, or Ngatiawa, should not merely consent, but actually propose, to receive a lord from Waikato, proves that old hatreds and jealousies are becoming

* Ki a Waika'o katoa.

Tau 1857, Pepuere 12.

Ko te whakaetanga tenei a Ngatihaua mo Potatau he kingi mo Niu Tirene.

E hoama. E nui to matou hiahia kia whakaturia a Potatau i tenei tau ano. Kia kana e whakaroa kia hohoro te runanga o nga Runanga. Kia hohoro te takoto te tikanga, a ka oti ka huhiua nga pukapuka ka karangatia te ra e whakaturia ai. Kia hohoro. Ma koutou e tuhituhi au ki nga iwi o tawhiti kia rongo ai ratou. Heoi ano.

NA WIREMU TARAPIPIPI,

me Ngatihaua katoa,

Kia Waikato, kia Te Kereihi, kia Pukewhau, kia Arama Karaka, kia Haropata, kia Tomo, kia Ruihana, kia Waata Te Ngatete.

Kia hohoro.

* “ Accident” is perhaps an improper expression to characterize a class of events which *must necessarily happen* in the ordinary course of things where a civilized and uncivilized race are in daily intercourse. The irruption of 300 armed men of Ngatipaoa into Auckland, so admirably repelled by the decision of Governor Sir G. Grey, was brought about by an “ accident.” The uneasy crisis, which attended the trial and execution of Marsden for the murder of the Ngatiwhakaue woman, and the agitation of the whole of the Waikato tribes by the death of the Tainui man were “ accidents” in the sense in which I have used the term. The Taranaki war, and the capture of Kororareka were the result of “ accidents.” The battle of Te Ihutaroa, in which 40 lives were lost, was brought on by an “ accident,” when the Missionaries who had assembled to avert bloodshed, had left the ground, thinking all danger of collision over.