

No. 29.

COPY OF A DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE, C.B., TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

Government House,
Auckland, New Zealand,
27th April, 1860.

No. 39.

MY LORD DUKE,—

In my Despatch, No. 35, of the 24th inst., I informed your Grace that immediately on my return to Auckland, I sent agents to the Waikato district for the purpose of conveying correct information respecting recent occurrences at Taranaki (of which the Chiefs had received various false statements and garbled reports), and to ascertain the views of the Waikato Chiefs with reference to the whole question.

2. It may be first necessary that I should inform your Grace that the agitation for a Maori King took a definite form about the year 1856 (though it had its origin at a much earlier date); that I treated it with silent indifference, trusting in the assurances of all who profess to be well acquainted with the Maori character, that after a time it would, if unopposed, die a natural death (see my Despatches on this subject *passim*). I was the more inclined to put faith in these assurances because Potatau, the King elect, has always been a faithful ally to the Government, and he assured me that no harm should ever come of the movement. For a long time there was every reason to believe that these prophecies were likely to be fulfilled; but in July, 1859, the inhabitants of Wellington were alarmed by a threatened attack from the Natives. It then appeared (as explained in my Despatch, No. 65, of 22nd August, 1859) that the fears of the Maories had been excited by some disaffected Europeans, who assured them that the settlers were meditating their destruction. I have since learnt that malicious reports to this effect had been spread from other centres and circulated very generally among the Maories, and, though several Chiefs communicated frankly with the Government on the subject, the falsehood appears to have taken deep root.

3. From that time the King movement, of which the chief feature is a desire for union and a separate nationality, revived and advanced with rapid strides. The agitation has been carried on with great energy and some secrecy. Emissaries have been sent in every direction to make proselytes: deputations have been received in some state: two tribes unconnected with the Waikatos have tendered their allegiance and presented their lands to the league, of which the King is the nominal head: great exertions have been made to obtain similar adhesions from other tribes: the King's Council openly assume the right to decide on the justice of my proceedings, and consider whether or not they will aid a Chief in rebellion against Her Majesty's Government. A large number have subscribed and given money to a disaffected European for a printing press to be conducted by him. A flag has been designed, and hoisted at the King's residence; and an abortive attempt was made at Kawhia to levy customs in the King's name. Under these circumstances, the dispute at Taranaki sinks into insignificance; indeed it is evident that unless W. King had calculated on support from this powerful confederation, he would never have presumed to offer resistance, or set up a claim so entirely without foundation.

I must therefore consider that the question at issue is one which affects Her Majesty's Sovereignty over the Islands of New Zealand, and nothing else. It is quite true that this Sovereignty as relates to the Maories has always been more nominal than real; but it is now evident that the Maories desire a separate nationality and union in order that they may exert a real Sovereignty, the existence of which would be incompatible even with that very mild and imperfect exercise of authority which has been hitherto maintained, and could not fail to bring on collision between the races.

Your Grace will observe that though this movement has been long in gestation, it is only very recently that it has made such rapid strides, and I cannot but think the occurrences at Taranaki fortunate, because, to use the expression adopted at the King meeting, "It has led to the discovery of "the Pah before the builders have had time to complete it."

4. The enclosures will convey to your Grace a graphic account of the meeting at Ngaruawhia. At the interview Mr. Smith then had with the Chief Potatau, he was unable to obtain any decisive expression of opinion. It appears, however, that a Chief named W. Tako, who is one of the most active agitators in favor of the King movement, had been sent to Taranaki to inquire, and report to Potatau and his Council, on the justice of W. King's claim. Of this Chief, Archdeacon Hadfield, in a letter to me, dated 8th September, 1859, says:—"This (feeling of discontent) has I believe been produced chiefly "by W. Tako,—a man of considerable ability, but whom I have never liked or trusted, who, being "well informed, has endeavoured to accumulate every grievance he can hear of, and by presenting "them in one view, to draw a conclusion unfavourable to the Government." W. Tako's report is enclosed: he informs the Council that he had "ascertained the causes of this war. I send you the "truth, which is this:—Friends, 'the sin' (the proper translation is 'the wrong') is W. King's: don't "you look towards the foolish work of this land." I attach also the report of a speech made by Potatau to his Chiefs after the departure of Mr. Smith from Ngaruawhia, when he dismissed the emissaries from the Taranaki and Ngatiruanui tribes, and forbade his people to assist them.

5. Thus stands the matter at present; but it is well known that Potatau, who is blind with age and very infirm, represents only the most moderate of the King party, and that his power to control those who advocate war, and a return to indiscriminate slaughter in prosecuting it, is very uncertain.

6. A large meeting of the Waikato tribes and those who sympathise with them, will be held in a few days at Ngaruawhia, when the subject of peace and war is to be discussed. I shall of course take

 NATIVE.

T. H. Smith.
Rev. Thos. Buddle.

 W. Tako.

 Potatau.
