

# DESPATCHES FROM GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE, C.B.

## No. 1.

DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR BROWNE TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

Government House, Auckland, New Zealand,  
22nd February, 1860.

MY LORD DUKE,—

In continuation of my Despatch No. 15, of the 17th instant, I beg leave to submit to your Grace a few remarks on the Maori population in the Middle Island, and those at Poverty Bay in the Northern Island, whom I visited during my recent tour.

2. The whole number of Natives inhabiting the Middle Island is estimated at between 2000 and 3000, of whom one half dwell in the Province of Nelson. Large tracts of land, more than sufficient for their utmost wants, have been reserved for them in various parts of the different provinces, and with the exception of a few at Otago, I rejoice to say that they have in most cases profited by their intercourse with the Europeans, and are generally in a satisfactory condition.

3. The Native settlements in Canterbury are for the most part quite equal to those in the Northern Island, and I was much gratified to find that a society has been established at Otago whose special object is the improvement of the small remnant of those people which still clings to the land occupied by their fathers.

4. At every Maori settlement which I visited the same request was preferred, viz. ; that I would have their lands individualised and reconveyed to them under crown grants.

5. I enclose an address presented to me by the Maories at Lyttelton, which refers distinctly to this subject, and is somewhat remarkable as it contrasts strongly with the desultory talk which usually characterises Maori assemblies.

6. Mr. Mackay, the Native agent in this Island, recently discovered that the Native title over a tract of seven and a half millions of acres at Arahura, on the West Coast, which was supposed to have been included in former purchases had not been extinguished ; and succeeded in doing so for the almost nominal sum of £200. The Natives to whom it belonged did not exceed 100 souls, and I wished much to have given individually crown grants for part of the reserve, carefully defining them and making them inalienable ; but in the existing state of the law I was unable to do more than make a reserve for them, as a body, of 10,000 acres which I directed to be carefully selected.

7. From the Middle Island I went to Turanga or Poverty Bay, on the East Coast of the Northern Island: and I will trouble your Grace with some details of what I saw there, because I see in them an example of the effect of unauthorised settlement by Europeans in districts where it is not possible to protect them unless at an enormous expense of men and money ; and secondly, because they afford one of many proofs that the demands for the acquisition of Native land are often made in utter ignorance of all the circumstances of the case, and are too often based on the single idea that the Government is bound to furnish, not only an adequate supply of land, but of that particular land which is especially coveted, without reference to the views and inclinations of the Natives, whose claims are entirely disregarded.

8. Turanga is a valley containing about 30,000 acres of very rich land, surrounded by mountains, very difficult of access, and approached only by a harbour which is open to the South-East winds. The inhabitants consist of about 1500 Maoris, and about 60 or 70 Europeans, among whom is the family of the Bishop of Waiapu and a Resident Magistrate. The Europeans in Auckland have always coveted this valley, and complained much that no steps have been taken to purchase it; while those resident in the district, who have with one or two exceptions settled there in defiance of Sir G. Gipps's Proclamation, complain as loudly of neglect on the part of the Government in not extending its protection to them.

9. In reply to some recent complaints, I requested the Commissioner appointed under the Land Claims Settlement Acts of 1856 and 1858, to visit this place and endeavour to reconcile the differences between the Europeans and the Natives; and he had only left the settlement, after an ineffectual attempt to do so, a few days before my arrival.

10. The Natives having been advised that the purchase of Native land by Europeans after the Proclamation referred to was illegal, reclaim all that they sold subsequent to that date, and no arguments appear to have any weight with them.

11. They were much wanting in courtesy to myself, stating that previous Governors had been afraid to visit them, and wishing to know why I did so. They objected to the Union Jack hoisted at the Magistrate's residence during my stay ; said they should not recognize the Queen, and that unless I visited them for the purpose of restoring the lands which the Europeans had cheated them out of, they did not wish to see me ; that I might return from whence I came, and take my English Magistrate with me. The Rev. Leonard Williams (a son of the Bishop of Waiapu), who had spent the greater part of his life in this valley, acted as my interpreter: and guided by his opinion, I merely gave a short reply, saying that although the Europeans had acted contrary to