

The Governor is responsible only to the Imperial Government for his policy, and the Ministers are responsible to the Assembly, under the resolutions, for faithfully endeavouring to carry it out. No one can deny that many difficulties and anomalies must occur in such a system. It is one which it is only possible to work where confidence exists between the Governor and Ministers.

ALFRED DOMETT.

Taranaki,
May 14, 1863.

No. 2.

MEMORANDUM BY THE GOVERNOR.

In reply to the Minute the Governor has received from Ministers, dated the 14th instant, he would begin by observing he has derived great advantages from the ability and zeal with which they have discharged the duties of their respective offices, and he is especially obliged to the Native Minister for the industry he has exhibited, and the desire he has always shewn to give effect to the Governor's views on the subject of Native affairs. Ministers will therefore see that when the Governor says the present system of conducting Native affairs works badly, it is of the system that he complains, and not of the mode in which it is carried out by those gentlemen to whom he so fully acknowledges his obligations.

When the Governor arrived in this country, he found the Native Secretary's department, and all the officers belonging to it, wherever they might be, under his control, and considerable sums of money were at his disposal for Native purposes.

He took also £27,000 per annum from funds which would be annually payable by the Colony to Great Britain in aid of Military expenditure, and with the consent of Her Majesty's Government (subsequently obtained), devoted that amount also to Native purposes. The Governor thus at that time possessed real power in Native affairs, and with it necessarily followed responsibility. He could then decide on Native matters and promptly administer Native affairs in whatever part of the Colony he might be. The officers of the Native department looked to him as their immediate head, and obeyed him as such. If the administration of Native affairs was not everywhere prompt and vigorous, he was to blame; and he could instantly, as he thought proper, modify all his plans and proceedings in detail, suiting them to the various exigencies which necessarily arise in a country circumstanced as this is.

The Governor was, however, informed, as Ministers now state, that the General Assembly had, in several previous Sessions, manifested a very strong desire to bring the Native Secretary's department under the control of Responsible Ministers, and had expressed this desire in resolutions and other proceedings.

Anxious to meet this reasonable desire of the House, the Governor gave up to his Ministers, at their urgent request, the entire control of the Native department, and the power of appropriating the sum of money placed at his disposal for Native purposes, including £27,000 payable for military objects to Great Britain. The equivalent Ministers gave as their part of the bargain was that they would assume the entire responsibility of Native affairs.

When the General Assembly met, the Governor with regret found that instead of meeting the wishes of the Legislature, he had displeased them. They said in fact that this agreement between the Governor and his Responsible Advisers had been concluded without their consent having been previously obtained; that they repudiated it, and threw upon the Governor the responsibility for Native affairs.

The Governor felt that as the Assembly repudiated the agreement, and threw back the responsibility upon him, the power of which he had divested himself must as of right be restored to him; and that it never could be said that whilst they repudiated their part of the contract, they held him to his.

The Native department has, however, in fact, remained entirely under the control of Ministers. The officers of that department have not recognised the Governor as their head; they have not taken their orders from him; the moneys for Native purposes have never been expended until the assent of Ministers had been previously obtained; and he has consequently never been able to act in Native matters with that vigour and promptitude which he believes to be essential to a successful administration of affairs. If these difficulties have arisen when he has had the advantage of having as his assistant so able and industrious a Native Minister as Mr. Bell, what must have been the result if a gentleman less able and less acquainted with Native affairs had held that office?

The Governor is of opinion that the General Assembly did not intend to place him in this position in regard to Native affairs, which he has continued to the present time to hold. He observes that in their resolutions they state that Ministers should undertake the administration of Native affairs, not as a matter of right, but only if the Governor requested them to do so; and he further observes that in the Act appropriating funds for Native purposes, the whole of those funds are for such purposes placed at the absolute disposal of the Governor, Ministers or the Executive Council not being even incidentally alluded to in the Act.

Feeling so strongly as he does the great evils which result to both races of Her Majesty's subjects from the present system, in which all power rests really in the hands of his Ministers,