

MEMORANDUM ON ROADS AND MILITARY SETTLEMENTS IN THE NORTHERN ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND.

The Colonial Government having succeeded in making a considerable addition to the Armed Forces of the Country, by the introduction of Volunteer Militiamen from Australia and Otago, and taken such other steps demanded by the immediate necessities of the crisis, as lay within its power, for aiding in the prosecution of the Native war, it seems to be incumbent upon it to mature some plans for the future security of the settlers and the permanent preservation of peace, which may be put into execution as soon as the success of the merely military operations will permit.

The object Government has in view, as stated in the Minute of Ministers of the 31st of July, 1863, is to make the present war, if possible, the last that ever shall be waged with the Native Tribes. No opportunity of renewing it with any chance of success must be left them. This is the demand of the Colony—a demand as natural and reasonable as it is urgent. It may not be practicable fully to satisfy this demand at present, but as much as can be done in that way must be done.

In the Minute alluded to, Ministers expressed their hope that a victory over the Waikato—the conquest of the most powerful Tribe in New Zealand—would be sufficient to deter any other Tribes from rebelling against British authority. That this would be the case is probable enough. On the other hand, they stated their opinion that it is possible that even such a conquest might not entirely prevent future outbreaks among a people whose whole history has been a series of wars of extermination. Defeats may be forgotten, and plausible reasons invented by the vanity natural to barbarians to account for our victories, without precluding the hope of better luck for themselves on another trial. The gradual withdrawal of the Troops which would follow any re-establishment of peace, would greatly help to do away with the moral effect of bygone military chastisements, especially with a people so difficult to convince as the Maoris are of the truth of any report or record of facts which go to wound their self esteem, and destroy that fancy of their own superiority which it must be allowed our proceedings towards them have so long fostered.

If the moral effect of one or two decisive victories is not to be relied upon as a sufficient guarantee for future peace without measures which will constitute a *material* guarantee, much more will such measures be necessary if the evasive tactics of the Maori should prevent such decisive victories, and the war should degenerate from a contest between large Tribes into a guerilla warfare, carried on by the Natives from and among their mountain fastnesses.

2. The most obvious material guarantees for the prevention of future wars are the making of roads that could be used by the Military everywhere throughout the Country; and the introduction of such an amount of armed population, formed into defensive settlements, as would overawe the Native Tribes, or if not overawe them, at least be always ready and able to check or punish their incursions and depredations. Both these measures have been commenced. It is now proposed to extend and continue them as far as appears to be practicable in the present circumstances of the Colony.

ROADS AND SETTLEMENTS.

3. The first consideration is—What lines of road to make, and where to place the settlements? Speaking in general terms, the Northern Island may be described as one entire expanse of forests and mountains, with the following exceptions:—*

A broad belt of country, generally open, stretching from the Waikato river mouth on the one side and the mouth of the Thames river on the other, and running all the way to Napier, between the Thames, the Lake Country, and an irregular line towards Mohaka (Hawke's Bay) on the North and East; and the Sea Coast, the Pirongia and Rangitoto ranges, Lake Taupo, and the end of the Ruahine ranges, on the South and West. This belt of generally open land, forty or fifty miles wide at the end of the last named ranges, then narrows gradually Southwards down to the coast at Cape Turnagain.

All round from Cape Turnagain to Wairapara, and up the West Coast from Porirua to Whanganui, and so round Mount Egmont to New Plymouth and Mokau, runs a comparatively narrow belt of open land, running up occasionally some distance into the interior, as at Manawatu, Rangitikei, &c., and forming rich valleys fit for settlement.

Near to the shores of Lake Taupo, on the West, East, and due South are plateaux or terraces of some extent, wooded or grassy, which form a sort of elevated table land in the middle of the island, interspersed with clusters of high mountains; but soon descending, except on the Hawke's Bay

* Vide plan attached.