

2. The first of these contains a most interesting report of a great meeting of natives which recently took place in the Wairoa district on the east coast, and the second of the enclosed reports containing some very valuable information regarding the present state of feelings in the Ngatikahungunu tribe, the whole of which Major Whitmore believes it is now quite possible to keep on the best terms with the European race.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, K.G.,  
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.,

G GREY.

Enclosure 1 in No. 17.

THE CIVIL COMMISSIONER, NAPIER, TO THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, AUCKLAND.

Civil Commissioner's Office, Napier,  
27th January, 1864.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you, that I have just returned from Wairoa, where I went by appointment and at the request of the natives, to attend a monster meeting to open the church, and declare "*sides*."

I endeavoured to write to you by the last mail, but though I chartered a small craft to take me across the bay, was unfortunate enough to miss the steamer. Letters for me relative to the landing of powder at Te Mahia were, however, forwarded to you by Mr. McLean, who opened them in my absence.

You are aware that some Europeans had been stopped in the Upper Wairoa by natives, more or less allied to the Uriweras, but still Ngatikahungunu. There has also been a very great feud between the native residents of the Upper and Lower Wairoa for some years. As regards the "King" and "Queen" question, their notions are so vague of the bearing of those terms, more especially in that remote part of the country, that I have found it to be a wiser course to avoid a discussion of a shadow, so long as I could carry out my object in reality. Oddly enough, the same chief who will argue for hours about the king will not think of defending disobedience to the law and the Queen's magistrate. Finding this to be the case, and having to deal with a district so slenderly inhabited, and twice as long as from Auckland to Whatawhata, I have refrained from all discussions about the Maori king. The difficulties of the country are such that to attempt to carry out by force the views of every Englishman of sense, viz., the establishment of law and order, would be a task for an immense army. A very little tact will achieve the same object, I hope, without the least sacrifice of principle or lowering of tone. The chief difficulty is the braggart way of talking indulged in by some of the straggling Pakeha Maories, or settlers in these distant regions. I found that few Maories came to the meeting without some suspicion that I should seize their persons if they did not at once consent to a very humiliating form of submission to the Queen.

The meeting lasted for very many hours, and the defiant speeches and taunts of hapu against hapu, the old feuds that were raked up again, and desultory skirmishing between the more hot-headed and younger orators, did not appear till long after dark to afford any opening for me to speak. As, however, night closed in, the proceedings appeared to become quieter, and at length the "Union of the River" was assented to. Some chiefs asked which section had gained its point; the queenites, kingites, or neutrals; and others what union meant; and why people who had always been quarrelling should become united? At last they begged me to speak, and I went between the two parties and told them that I did not ask who were kingites or who were queenites. That Mr. Ward had told them that we should not go to war about the king. We had kept that promise. The Waikatos began to murder our countrymen, and we took up arms in self-defence. That if "the king" was not intended to stand he would fall. I had my own ideas about him, and as far as things had gone I believed that his authority had not sufficed to close the Waikato. All I asked of a tribe which had not done anything to assist him, which was wholly unconnected with his, which had been in the memory of all the chiefs round me oppressed and even butchered by the Waikatos, was to let time decide whether there was any sense in the title he had assumed, or any advantage to be gained by talking about it. That "union," to my way of thinking, meant the submission of all to one law, equal to young and old, strong and weak, Maori and European, that law I was there to establish. I left among them a gentleman specially selected to administer it, and it was by their united co-operation alone that a single man and one policeman could carry out the law. They could easily understand the absurdity of a case of trespass of the same cow being settled in one way at Wairoa and differently at the other end of the flat, when the circumstances were identical in each case. They understood well enough when they wanted a house built, to employ a carpenter; when sick, to send for the doctor; and could readily understand that practice makes perfect on the one hand, and that those who study a single subject are less likely to make mistakes about it than those who give their attention to a dozen. So I told them they would find their magistrate to be the proper person to decide all cases of dispute, and each he considered would make him better able to understand others. I told them that one policeman supported by them was better than a number relying on themselves, because wherever there were people the single policeman would be sure of assistance, and evildoers would be cautious of provoking their immediate relatives, though they might feel willing to try to evade a number of police living at another kainga. I told them not to believe the lies current in the country. It was true they were promulgated as much by Pakehas as Maories, but they were still lies. For instance, what stories had they heard of me? Why did some of them hide from me when they arrived? Why were they always afraid of my coming to Wairoa? I was there to answer them.

I was immediately assailed with questions. Was I not going to disarm them at once, and put those who refused to give up their arms in prison? Was I not going to seize land at the Wairoa for my policemen? (Col. Defence Force.) Was I not going to put up a pa? Was I not restrained only by M'Lean from fighting with them at once? And such like questions. I answered them all, and then each