

R E P O R T

OF AN

INTERVIEW BETWEEN R. C. MAINWARING, ESQ., R.M.,
WHATAWHATA, AND WILLIAM THOMPSON.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

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1865.

REPORT OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN R. C. MAINWARING, ESQ., R.M.
WHATAWHATA, AND WILLIAM THOMPSON.

No. 1.

The Hon. NATIVE MINISTER to the RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Whatawhata.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 22nd August, 1865.

You are no doubt fully acquainted with all the circumstances attending Mr. G. Graham's mission to William Thompson, which resulted in the latter making his submission to General Carey. The Government is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to secure the final and permanent alliance of that influential Chief to the cause of the Queen, and of the law. No steps have as yet been taken by the Government to communicate with Thompson, since his submission, except a letter from the Governor, of which a copy is enclosed; and it is to be feared that if he shall take up the idea that he has been slighted, he may not only recant his submission, but exhibit all that active and dangerous hostility which would result from a feeling that he had sacrificed his own cause without gaining our confidence.

The Government is therefore of opinion that a visit should be made to William Thompson by some officer in the service and in the full confidence of the Government, and has selected you for this important mission.

Your principal object will be to enter into a full explanation with that Chief as to his present position, and as to his true relations with the Government, and to possess yourself with his whole mind on the subject.

You will inform him that His Excellency and the Government received with the greatest pleasure the news of his submission, and that nothing but the press of business connected with the meeting of the Assembly has delayed this recognition at an earlier period. You will inform him that the two petitions which he addressed to the General Assembly,—the one dated 15th May, through myself, and other dated 18th July, through Mr. G. Graham,—have both been laid before the House of Representatives, and that the House was pleased to receive them. The first of these documents, of which I enclose copies, is a general statement of grievances; the second is a specific request for an inquiry into his own character as regards the origin and conduct of the war. With regard to the petitions you will acquaint him, that there is no object to be gained in instituting such an inquiry as that which he claims—that all the events connected with the war have been regarded from opposite points of view by different persons—that the Government deeply regrets that it was called upon to take the steps which it did take, but which it believed to be absolutely necessary for the safety of the Colony. That the Government is quite willing to believe that he thought he was acting right; but you will at the same time point out to him that his conduct in supporting the revolt against the Queen's authority instead of siding with the Government, and throwing his whole influence into that scale, has only helped to prolong a struggle which was utterly hopeless, to reduce the Native districts to a state of anarchy, and to involve the Native Race in inevitable destruction. He should be brought to see that if he now joins the Government, heart and soul, in the maintenance of the law and of civil order, all the charges which have been brought against him of double dealing will be entirely forgotten, and he will be honored and esteemed as he well deserves to be.

But one main point of your interviews with him, for I am not under the impression that you will accomplish this mission without many interviews, will be to point out to him very plainly that he cannot halt between two opinions. The murderers of Mr. Volkner and Mr. Fulloon must be arrested and brought to justice. The Government is about to issue a proclamation of peace, bringing the war to a final conclusion, and offering pardon to all except to those who have committed some of the worst murders,—that is murders that no state of war could justify or excuse. With these exceptions peace will be offered to all, and no more land will be taken. At the same time whilst no further steps will be taken against rebels, a strong expedition is sailing to Opotiki to arrest the murderers of Mr. Volkner and Mr. Fulloon, and if not given up their lands will be taken to provide the cost of establishing a police force in the district. The same policy will be pursued in all future cases of murder, under an Act now passing, of which I send you a copy. All this you must explain to Thompson, so that he may fully understand that whilst the Government will take no further steps to punish those who have been in arms against the Queen, it is resolved to put down all acts of violence; and as he has always proclaimed himself the advocate of peace and of law,—and the Government is willing to give him every credit for entire sincerity,—so it now expects him to come forward boldly and aid in the task of arresting these criminals. The Government is quite aware that the Ngatihauas are at enmity with the Arawas, who are fighting for us, and you may find great difficulty in dealing with this point. But it may possibly rest somewhat with him whether this strife shall continue: We require him to use all his influence to call off those who are fighting in the Bay of Plenty. The Arawas will be asked to assist us only until the murderers of Volkner and Fulloon are taken and hanged. Nothing will then stand in the way of peace, if Thompson can be brought to use his whole influence in insisting on the other party laying down their arms.

It may naturally be said that Thompson will expect something on our part if he undertakes to use his authority in our favor. But on this subject the greatest delicacy is required. If I have taken a correct view of this Chief's character, any attempt to bribe or buy him would be met with increased suspicion and mistrust. The Government desire to do nothing of the kind. But it is possible that he

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may have favors to ask us as regards the lands of the Ngatihauas which have been confiscated. And, so far as such lands are not granted or promised to others, the Government would be disposed to listen to any representation of Thompson with favor, should he use all his influence at this moment to restore peace in the Bay of Plenty, and to get the murderers surrendered. On this subject, however, whilst you might arrive at what Thompson wants, you must be careful to make no promises of any kind until you have reported to the Government.

On the subject of the Hau Hau religion, I write in doubt, and shall not be surprised to hear that you have great difficulty. The line which the Government will take is this. They will not interfere with the Hau Haus so long as they confine their operations to the harmless expression of opinion, or the practices of ceremonies within the law; but they are resolved, so soon as in any case that opinion shall appear in the form of open crime, or even of a conspiracy to commit crime, to arrest the criminals at once, at any cost and at any risk.

I leave it entirely to yourself to judge how you can best fulfil the mission which I entrust to you. The object of the Government is to finally and distinctly detach William Thompson from the Ngati-manipoto faction, by committing him to some unmistakable course on our side, and they are aware that it may require considerable patience, judgment, and skill to bring this result about. But they wish at the same time that Thompson should be fully aware that if he will now help the Government to restore peace, he will be as great an object of respect and esteem with the Government and the Europeans as he has hitherto been of mistrust.

You are at liberty to employ any Secretary or Interpreter to aid you in recording all your important conversations with Thompson, and to incur such expenses as may be necessary to enable you to fulfil this mission with the least possible delay.

I have, &c.,

J. E. FITZGERALD.

The Resident Magistrate, Whatawhata.

No. 2.

R. C. MAINWARING, Esq. to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Whatawhata, Upper Waikato, 28th September, 1865.

I have the honor to inform you that immediately on receipt of your letter, covering the *Gazette* containing the peace proclamation, I proceeded to Te Au-o-Waikato, on the Piako River, where I met William Thompson, he having come to that place to attend the funeral of his sister, who was accidentally drowned.

I informed Thompson of the reasons why no notice had been hitherto taken of his conference with General Carey. That now I had been sent by the Government,—not to make any definite promises in any way whatever, but simply to bring certain subjects under his notice, and ascertain his own opinions and wishes for transmission to the Government.

1st.—With regard to his petitions to the House of Representatives. I explained to him that they were under the consideration of the House, and would be fairly dealt with. However, when I read the second petition through, he inquired most earnestly whether the Government had consented to establish a Court of Inquiry into his own conduct throughout the war. I pointed out to him that the subject had had full consideration, but that the Government were of opinion that no particular good would result from such an investigation. That men occupying prominent places in every state of society were more or less liable to have their conduct and character criticised, and that if he would now stand forward as an ally of the Government, and aid in handing over certain criminals to justice, all would be forgotten, and we should one and all esteem him. He replied “I shall not rest till my conduct has been tried. Let Arney or Beckham try me. Fox wrote home to the Queen and her Ministers, and said that I made a plot to burn Auckland and murder the women and children. Let my letter to Archdeacon Brown be tried. If there is murder in that, it is right that I should suffer.”

The next point which I introduced was the murders of Mr. Volkner and Fulloon. I informed him of the steps which were already taken for the arrest of their murderers, and that the Government looked to him as a man of influence for his co-operation, which alone would be a sufficient test of his sincerity. He replied “Let not the Government think that I am now a man of influence, I have no men, all are dead. The people are angry with me for making peace. I am made the subject of songs amongst the men, women and children.” Thompson here quoted one song, laughing at him for the loss of the Taiaha which he gave to General Carey. “The anger of those who have lost relatives is intense. I am afraid of my life. I have no one to protect me. I hate the work of Kereopa, and have forbidden him to enter these boundaries. I will not see him. He is a murderer. I am powerless to arrest him, but I have no sympathy with him and will be glad when he is dead.”

I was not at all surprised to hear Thompson speak in the most contemptible terms of the conduct of the Arawa. He said “I know the Arawa well. They are fighting on the side of the Governor only for money. They hold out one hand to fight, and the other to receive money and food. If the reward simply followed the fighting, it would be well. If a stranger goes amongst them, they say ‘take our daughters and live with them,’ as long as the stranger supplies the relations with food and money the woman is left; when these cease, she is taken away. So will it be with the Government, except that they are now afraid of the people, and will look to the Pakcha for assistance. However let them help the Governor to arrest Kereopa, and it will be well.”

I did not see in Thompson the slightest disposition to ask anything at the hands of the Government, with the exception of the investigation into his character. He openly told me that neither he nor any other Native approved of the confiscation, and that the subject was never conversed upon amongst themselves. I inquired if there was no request he wished me to make as to his lands, but he simply replied “we have stood on Maungakawa, we looked down on Horotiu and shed tears, and now the pain is constantly gnawing at our hearts.” The policy which the Government intend to pursue with regard to the Pai Marire fanaticism, appeared not only completely to satisfy Thompson, but all who were present. I informed him that the Government would take no notice of it so long as they

confined themselves to simply performing the rites of their religion, but that if any Maori committed an offence against the law, he would be equally liable to punishment as any member of the Roman Catholic or Wesleyan churches. He told me that there was nothing at all in the Pai Marire "Karkia" or service to instigate or encourage men to commit murder, or any other crime. That on the contrary, the very name of the sect meant nothing more than living quietly and peaceably together. That the outrages recently committed did not originate in the Pai Marire religion, but in the heart of Kereopa and his associates, and that therefore no blame was to be attributed to those who professed the new religion.

Lastly.—I introduced the proposition to include Natives amongst the Representatives of the Colony. Thompson told me that he had made a similar suggestion to Major Nugent some years ago, but that it was only laughed at. He said, "Why are only Rangatira's to be admitted? Do you think that there are not many better men amongst the Maoris in the lower classes." He positively refuses to take any part in such a proceeding so long as the stain on his character remains. To illustrate it, he fastened a piece of flax to his leg and to the side of the house, and said that until the Government broke the flax he could not do otherwise than remain hidden in his territory.

I do not see how it would be possible for Thompson to undertake any specific course in arresting Kereopa and the other murderers. Independent of his having no men to assist him, the fear he is in of his own personal safety (of which I have not the least doubt) would be quite sufficient to prevent his practical assistance; even Matutaera, who owes his influence and position principally to Thompson, has openly stated that he is separated from him, and no longer recognizes him as his friend.

While I give Thompson credit for a certain amount of sincerity, I do not forget that he is still a Maori with Maori feelings and Maori sympathies; and that although as I believe he hates murders and all outrages, his coming forward as our ally, would end, if not in his destruction, at least in the entire loss of his influence with his people.

I promised him that I would communicate to the Government what had occurred during our conversation, and would let him know the result as early as possible.

I enclose herewith a statement, in Thompson's own handwriting, of what occurred at his interview with General Carey, which I hope will be sufficient to falsify the absurd statements made by other Natives.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

I have, &c.,
R. C. MAINWARING, Resident Magistrate.

No. 3.

Whatawhata, 23rd September, 1865.

I have this day heard a false statement. It is said that Colonel Carey gave me his sword. This is absolutely untrue. The only sword he gave to me was his hand. Secondly, a part of a cooked potatoe; he had one part, and I had one part. That was the only sword I took away with me.

Friends, beware of Gehazi,* the prophet's servant, because he is infected with the evil disease (leprosy), lest some other disease (trouble) should arise—namely, the judgment.

Enough: it turns (ends).

WIREMU TAMIHANA TE WAHAROA.

See II Kings,
chap. V., 29 to 27
verses.

