

Enclosure 2 to No. 31.

Sir W. MARTIN to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Auckland, 23rd December, 1865.

I have the honor to address you in reference to the important subject upon which I entered in the Notes on the best mode of working "The Lands Act," and in the letter, dated 18th July last, accompanying those Notes. Further consideration has confirmed my conviction that there yet remains open to us a course of action whereby we may escape from our present difficulties in Native matters, and may attain the objects we desire, and that by a process neither costly nor difficult. I desire, therefore, now to complete the review of the subject which I then commenced. I feel assured that you, Sir, considering the importance of the matter, will give a patient hearing even to a statement which, from the nature of the case, cannot be very brief. Before proceeding to define the course of action which I desire to commend to the consideration of the Government, it will be necessary to notice our present relations to the Native population of this Island.

The whole Native population may be divided into two sections:

1. The first section comprises the population in the North, in the Gulf of Hauraki, and in the lower part of the Waikato; and again in the greater part of the Provinces of Wellington and Hawke's Bay; and again in various districts about the East Cape, and to the southward of that Cape. These people are, as a whole, desirous of living at peace with us, and the more intelligent of them are convinced that a real union with us is the only means of securing to themselves peace and prosperity. Amongst them many have shown themselves willing to support our cause, even to the death. Yet it is not to be supposed that there exists in these districts universal or complete confidence in the Pakeha. On the contrary, distrust and suspicion exists even in the most friendly districts. Men actually engaged in fighting on our side have avowed that they could not feel assured that even their sacrifices on our behalf would in the end secure them just and considerate treatment, and have calmly and reasonably stated the grounds on which it appeared to them impossible to repose entire confidence in us.

2. The second section includes the greater part of the former occupants of the lands comprised within the blocks marked out by various recent Proclamations issued under the New Zealand Settlements Act, in the district of Waikato, and of the South-western tribes from Taranaki to Wanganui, together with all such portions of the Native population elsewhere as have espoused their quarrel. The new Hau Hau worship appears to have become, for the present, the recognized bond of union of all these.

Let us now consider the elements of which this latter group is comprised.

Waikato.

3. In Waikato, a large portion of the Native owners hold their position outside the boundary line traced by the Proclamation, kept from their old possessions by the presence of a large force, suffering privations, exasperated but not subdued. If we desire to comprehend rightly the state of mind of these people, we must put ourselves in their place. We must also remember how widely the estimate formed by the Natives of our dealings with them differs from that which is current among ourselves. To them all the doings of the Pakeha present themselves as one great whole. Englishmen are apt to accept various solutions of the public questions which cannot be accepted by them. If the justness or fitness of a public measure be canvassed, we often hear it said that such a measure was adopted or acquiesced in for such and such reasons; the reason being oftentimes connected, not with the intrinsic merits of the measure in question, but only with the internal working of our complicated system of Government. The Natives, knowing little of our internal politics, look only at the general result. There is reason to believe that the view commonly taken by the people of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers is the following: They had combined in an attempt to form an independent Government, a movement which they had come to believe right and even necessary. They were told that the name of King would not in itself be deemed a cause of war, and the more moderate party were careful not to give their stronger neighbour any other cause for entering their borders. For a long time they succeeded in restraining their turbulent brethren, even in the face of preparations for war visibly and steadily advancing on our part. Then came the re-occupation of the Tataraimaka, and the resumption of hostilities by Rewi, and soon after the entrance of our troops into Waikato. Two vain attempts were made to withstand our advance by fair fighting. Shortly after, on the 6th December, a letter was written in the Governor's name, to all the Chiefs of Waikato. "Your letter of the 2nd December has reached me. Sons, my words to you are these,—The General must go uninterrupted to Ngaruawahia (the King's village). The flag of the Queen must be hoisted there. Then I will talk to you." The promised conference did not take place. The troops went forward, not indeed to follow Rewi into his territory, but to take possession of the lands of the nearer tribes. Can we be surprised at this course appearing to them severe and unjust, when they saw no distinction made between the two sections into which the population of Waikato had been divided through the whole period of these troubles; between those who had been driven to take up arms by the Natives, which they could not honorably disregard, and those whose wilfulness had renewed the war; or rather, when they saw the less offending heavily punished, and the more offending visited with a comparatively slight punishment?

4. Our adversaries in Waikato believe themselves guilty of no wrong in contending for their nationality. It has not been usual for Maori tribes to yield up their lands to an invader without repeated efforts to recover them. Some may be disposed to submit, but this cannot bind or control their brethren. It may be expected that the majority may have much the same feeling as the majority of our own people would have if they could be placed in like circumstances. There appears to be ground for the apprehension which has been expressed that in case of the dispossessed Maoris actually making an effort to re-possess their lands, they may find allies on the Northern side of Auckland. Persons who have had good opportunities for observing, report that the presence of the prisoners in that part, after their escape from the Kawau, has generated in some portions of the population a strong sympathy with their cause.