

Enclosure in No. 27.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. RICHMOND.

Wellington, 20th February, 1868.

His Excellency will naturally expect information on the subject of the Rev. R. Taylor's letter to the Duke of Buckingham, with its enclosures, forwarded from the Colonial Office in Despatch No. 74, of 22nd November, 1867. In offering it, however, Ministers observe that Mr. Taylor's attack is not of itself entitled to their attention. It is of that random kind which, whilst it is the easiest to make, gives the most trouble in repelling.

Two subjects are treated in Mr. Taylor's letter, the claims of the late John Williams Hipango, and the wrongs of certain chiefs and tribes. As to the former, it is sufficient to remark that whilst Mr. Taylor states that the property left by that chief is adequate to supporting any dignity Her Majesty may be pleased to confer on his son, the Colonial Government have so far recognized the claims of the father as to maintain the boy at school at a cost of £50 per annum, and to pay the expense of his passage to England, favors not often conferred on private persons of either race.

The complaints of the Maori writers require fuller comment. Mr. Taylor has not been very well informed, or if well informed, he has not been candid enough to state, that eleven out of the twenty-three signatures to his enclosures are those of men deeply, actively, and persistently engaged in resisting Her Majesty's authority in the Colony. The writers referred to are chiefs of the Ngatiruanui and Ngarauru tribes, the fighting men of the former of which in 1860 marched *en masse* upwards of sixty miles from their own borders to attack a British settlement, at a time when no soldier had ever turned his face towards their district, when no Europeans, except a missionary, were resident there, and not a rood of the land of the tribe had been sold, given to, or negotiated for, or taken by the Government or any European. The Ngatiruanui were in fact the most aggressive tribe in the country, and their name has become a proverb of hostility to the Crown and Colony. The Ngatiruanui and part of the Ngarauru lands have been taken under "The New Zealand Settlements Act, 1863." As that Act has been prominently before the Imperial Government it is not necessary to discuss its provisions. Under a more recent Act for dealing with confiscated lands, very large reserves, including the majority of their old kaingas and favorite places have been made for the use of the tribes. The reserves form really princely estates which, when order and confidence are fully re-established, may be let or farmed by the tribes at considerable profit. These tribes, on their surrender, have also been provided with a Magistrate, and their property protected by the Government with even more than ordinary care. None of them have been treated as slaves or criminals, but the full privileges of British subjects have been immediately resumed by them.

Turning now to the twelve names of Natives who have not been in arms against Government, it appears that they belong to the Lower Whanganui tribes. Eight of the twelve are receiving salaries, pensions, or education for their children, at the expense of the Government. They have some of them served in the war as regular troops, and have had pay, allowances, and land, on the same scale as other Militia forces. For casual service special pay has also been given, and presents of a river steamer, a lifeboat, &c., have been made.

From the Native Militia of Whanganui having been engaged in the campaigns against the Ngatiruanui and Ngarauru, some of the chiefs of the tribe have conceived the idea that the confiscated territory belongs to them by right of conquest, and some small ancient claims of the tribe or a few individuals have been magnified to extend over a large part of the Ngarauru and Ngatiruanui lands. The New Zealand Settlements Act provides an independent Court, in which the Judges of the Native Lands Court preside, for examining claims of loyal persons within confiscated territory and awarding compensation. Practically, the compensation has taken the form of a return of the land for which claims have been proved, or as near it as the vague nature of Native titles would allow. The Compensation Court sat long at Whanganui, in the midst of the tribe whose chiefs now complain, and, after several adjournments upon their motion, patiently examined their claims. The Court was subjected at the time to not a little pressure from the menaces of the tribe, whose boastful temper is shown in the letters before His Excellency. It awarded but little land to the members of the tribes of Whanganui. In confirmation of the substantial fairness of the award, it may be stated that the Whanganui tribe, in defining the boundary of the land first sold to the New Zealand Company, were limited by the opposition of their neighbours, the Ngarauru, to a distance of seven or eight miles westward from the River Whanganui. Sales have since been made of land extending twelve miles further in the same direction along the coast, or twenty miles from the River Whanganui; the sellers were not, however, the Whanganui, but the Ngarauru. The land confiscated abuts on the remotest of the last-named districts. The nearest point in it is twelve miles distant westward from the old accepted boundary of the Ngarauru and Whanganui tribes. The claim of Whanganui in the confiscated lands was repudiated with indignation by Ngarauru and Ngatiruanui at the sitting of the Court.

But the Government being aware before that sitting of the ideas which during the anarchy of the last eight years had grown up in the minds of the friendly Whanganui tribe, and believing that their claims would not be for a moment recognized, it was thought advisable that a Member of the Cabinet should visit the tribe at the time of the sitting. This was done, and to mitigate the disappointment of the tribe at the unfavorable award of the Compensation Court several additional gifts of land were made, and the considerable sum of £2,500 was given to the claimants. The money was waiting acceptance by the tribe before Mr. Taylor left for England, and he could hardly but be aware of this, living in the chief settlement of the tribe, and in hourly communication with them.

Mr. Taylor's assertion that any chief, or, indeed, any member of the tribe, has been injured or has ever received insult from the Government is a slander not excused by the smallest foundation, in fact it is the very opposite of true. As an invariable rule, all Maoris are treated with kindness and courtesy by Government. A Hostelry, Office, and Interpreter are devoted to their use in every important settlement. They are received with more of personal attention than men of little education among the European race would expect or care for; and in the particular matter of the land claims, the subject of Mr. Taylor's communication, the chiefs interested, including the writers of the letters