

These people have done much and suffered much to maintain their King and their independence of British law, and one would have thought that they would have discussed how far Sir George Grey's proposals would affect them—what chances the acceptance of them implied in Tawhiao's position and their own; but not one word was said on these all-important subjects. There was, however, a good deal of consultation by the chiefs, in private, after the meeting, and I learn this (Saturday) morning that Tawhiao expressed himself entirely agreeable to the proposals; indeed he communicated with Sir George late on Friday night stating that he wished the paper signed and settled which Sir George Grey had given him specifying what the Government had agreed to do. This morning, however, Tawhiao again communicated with the Premier and the Native Minister, stating that he, and those whom he was in the habit of consulting with, considered that it would be better not to conclude the business at present. There were people at the Thames, at Taupo, at Tauranga, at Taranaki, at Wanganui, who had been acting with them, and who had given constant countenance and support to Tawhiao. They felt that it was only right that these people should be consulted, and a full confirmation might be given to the agreement with the consent of all the chiefs of the Island who had acted in the erection and support of the Maori King.

On Saturday morning the whole settlement was astir at daylight, and all the visitors were preparing to return home. People in groups—on horseback and on foot—poured out of the *kainga* shortly after sunrise, and before 8 o'clock the place had quite an altered appearance. The large house, in which about 200 people had slept, and which, at night, was dimly lighted with candles let down from the roof in wooden chandeliers, had only a few occupants, and remembering the story-telling, song-singing, and card-playing of which it had been the scene on the previous evening reminded one of the banquet hall deserted of which Moore writes. Tawhiao came to our place in high spirits, well dressed, to accompany us part of the way, having with him his favourite gun—a single-barrelled one—which he wanted to take to Alexandra to get repaired. Sir George left at 10 o'clock, and rode down to Alexandra within three hours, being, apparently, in better health and spirits than for some days. Mr. Sheehan followed shortly afterwards with Te Wheoro and Paul Tuhaere. Te Ngakau, the King's Prime Minister, and Tu Tawhiao, the King's eldest son, rode into Aléxandra, and Tawhiao himself came as far as Manganika, within three or four miles of Alexandra. Probably he would have come the whole distance had not heavy rain begun to fall. Tu Tawhiao (his son), I might say, is an exceedingly fine-looking young man, and, so far as I have seen, behaves himself with dignity. Sir George Grey had intended to proceed direct to Auckland, but, instead, decided on going up to-morrow to see Rewi. So ended the great meeting at Hukurangi, and it must be the fervent desire of every well-wisher to the colony that it may be the beginning of the end of the Native difficulty, and that the proceedings of Sir George Grey and Mr. Sheehan may be completely successful. I am not in any way apprehensive of any obstacle being caused by the chiefs of the Thames or Taupo, or of any other district, nor am I much afraid of any hostile pakeha influence. The greatest danger is in the advice which may be given by some men, a few of the more fanatical and determined of Tawhiao's own people. Probably Tawhiao will not himself change his place of residence to the Lower Waikato, but some of his people may come down. However, the final acquiescence in the confiscation which followed the war and in the land sales which have taken place since is of inestimable worth to Auckland. My own estimate of the advantage in that respect is a high one; and the further advantage of roads through the country, which may be secured by agreement with Rewi Maniapoto, will enable Auckland to make rapid progress within the next few years.

Sunday, 12th May.

Sir George Grey, the Hon. J. Sheehan, and Mr. Grace went to-day (Sunday) to see Rewi at his settlement at the Puniu, and have not yet returned. Tawhiao is at a settlement within a mile and a half from Alexandra, but he is not expected to come in here. The expectation amongst the Natives seems to be that the agreement will be thoroughly carried out on Tawhiao's part, and that Te Ngakau will endeavour to get from Parliament some compensation for the confiscation, and something on account of the lands sold since the war in Waikato. There seems no question that, in pursuance of the agreement, Kawhia will be opened for trade.

Monday, 13th May.

Tawhiao remained at the settlement of Whatiwhatihoe, about a mile from Alexandra, till this morning, when he started on his return to Hukurangi. He told a European who visited him this morning that last night he had crossed the river, and had walked about Alexandra; but that was only chaff. He would have thought it sneaking and ungentlemanly to have come into a European settlement, for the first time, in such a way as that.

One important question which had to be dealt with in any arrangement made with the Kingites was that affecting those who are living amongst them, and who have committed crimes according to English law. Several of those men were at the late meeting, and they seemed as agreeable to the visit of the Europeans, and as cheerful and happy as any present. Whether they take it for granted that they are not to be molested I do not know; but, in the absence of any assurance from the Government, I should think they feel uneasy. These men—I mean Te Kooti, Nuku, Purukutu, Winiata, and others—have apparently not exerted themselves to prevent a settlement being brought about, or probably they have had no power in the matter. During the negotiations the Premier and Native Minister had some conversation with the chiefs of the Kingites on the subject. They said they could not give these men up, as they all had relations who would oppose it. The Premier and Native Minister did not insist that they should do so, but it was understood that we should be at liberty to take them if we could, and try them. If the Queen's power is to be felt all over the Island it cannot be long, unless an amnesty is proclaimed, before some of them come in our way, and are made to answer for their crimes.

Between 11 and 12 o'clock to-day the party left Alexandra in the steamer "Waikato," which was enabled to come up the river by the heavy rainfall of the preceding Saturday. Tu Tawhiao, the King's eldest son, accompanied the Native Minister, and is going with him to attend a meeting of the Natives at Tamahere. There is a dispute as to the boundary of the lands of Ngatihaua and Ngatiraukawa, and Tu Tawhiao is to aid the Native Minister in settling it. Tu Tawhiao is a fine-looking young man, of about twenty-five years of age. Since the war he has never been further than Alexandra. He will pay a visit to Auckland in a short time. He was, I believe, born in the Auckland Domain, when Potatau and his family lived there.