

No. 2.

The PREMIER to His Excellency the ADMINISTRATOR.

Memorandum for His Excellency.

MINISTERS have had under consideration the despatch from the Secretary of State, dated the 8th August last, enclosing copy of a memorial to the Queen from certain Maori Chiefs of New Zealand, and inviting this Government to favour him with any observations they may wish to make thereupon.

2. The memorial professes to be signed "For the Native people of New Zealand." After full inquiry, Ministers have ascertained that but few Maoris were aware that such a memorial was to be presented; and that several of those who knew what was intended have no sympathy with the proceedings of Hirini Taiwhanga, from whom the memorial emanated.

3. Taiwhanga belongs to Ngapuhi, the principal tribe in the northern part of the North Island. He is not a man of any rank; and he has no importance beyond what he has gained in consequence of his abilities and education. As an intelligent boy, he was educated under the direction of the late Bishop Selwyn; and subsequently, it being desired to push forward Native youths of promise, he was, after due instruction, appointed by the Government a licensed surveyor. The appointment was not a success; and in June, 1872, his license was revoked, in consequence of malpractices, reported by the Inspector of Surveys and two Judges of the Native Land Court.

4. The Government had for several years been making efforts to establish schools in Native districts for the education of Maori children, and in 1877, Taiwhanga was appointed master of such a school at his native settlement, Kaikohe. His remuneration was a capitation allowance; but his conduct in this position was so bad, that the school had to be broken up. He neglected his work, absented himself from the school and from the settlement, and, by rendering grossly false returns of the number of children attending the school, he obtained money not due to him for capitation. Taiwhanga's conduct in other transactions has been equally open to condemnation.

5. The other two members of the deputation also belong to Ngapuhi. One is a grandson, and the other a nephew, of Parore, a Ngapuhi Chief of high family and of great respectability. He is upwards of ninety years of age, and was induced by Taiwhanga to provide the money to take his relatives as a deputation to England to see the Queen. The men themselves are respectable, but have not taken a leading position in their tribe.

6. The only object in giving these particulars is to enable the Secretary of State to form an opinion as to the weight that should attach to the statements and proceedings of the deputation.

7. With regard to the "wrongs" detailed in the memorial, Ministers desire to point out that the first six have reference to transactions during the time Native affairs in New Zealand were under the control and management of the Imperial Government, through their officer, the Governor of the Colony. A full history of these transactions will no doubt be found in the Parliamentary papers, Imperial and Colonial, in the Colonial Office; and on reference to such papers, it will be seen how little reason the Maoris have to complain.

8. The "wrong" standing as No. 7 in the memorial, has relation to a dispute between two tribes in reference to land, with which the Government of the Colony had no connection, and for which they were not in any way responsible.

9. Nos. 8 and 9 refer to recent transactions, for which the Colonial Government were entirely responsible. A full account, and the justification of the Government's conduct, will be found in the documents from time to time transmitted through the Governor to the Secretary of State.

10. The special legislation referred to in the memorial as "unauthorized laws relating to Maori lands . . . not assented to by the Native Chiefs in all parts of the Island," and as having no "basis in the Treaty of Waitangi," is not restrictive but enabling. The object of the Native Land Acts enumerated was to provide a special tribunal for the determination of Native title; to relieve the Maori owners from the monopoly held by the Government; and to enable them to sell their lands to whomsoever they pleased. In no way are the provisions of the Acts compulsory. The Maoris were and are at liberty to avail themselves of the powers conferred, or to abstain from doing so, at their pleasure.

11. It may be stated that, with the exception of lands confiscated for rebellion, no land whatever has been taken from the Maoris by the Government. With the exception stated, all lands acquired from Natives by Government have been acquired from willing sellers, and fully paid for. The £700,000 referred to has been paid to them, besides other large sums, for what was to them unprofitable waste.

12. The general legislation of the Colony as to the Maoris has been more than just—it has been exceptionally favourable to them. When laws have been made applicable to the people of the Colony, the object has, in many instances, been to except the Maoris from their stringency; and there is no instance in which they have been placed in a less favourable position than the European population. Of the many laws on the statute-book of the Colony which bear out this statement, one illustration may be mentioned: the Maoris are specially exempted from all direct taxes on both real and personal property.