

the Judge laughs at me and says that the Governor counts me a deputy Bishop in George's absence. I only think it pleasant and thank worthy to find him (Sir George [Grey]) and the principal laymen taking so earnest an interest in these matters.<sup>23</sup>

But the issue which was to arouse Sarah's active response was the Waitara Purchase, leading to the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s. In March 1860 Governor Gore Browne, responding to settlers' pressure for land, enforced the purchase of Maori land in Taranaki based on the principle of individual ownership which was contrary to all principles of Maori land tenure recognised by the Government since 1840. The clergy were acutely conscious that their role was to stand aloof from politics but Bishop Selwyn sent 'a solemn protest' to the Governor. Formal public statements by other public figures and missionary organisations, published in pamphlet form,<sup>24</sup> were responded to by politicians and landowners seeking to justify the action of the New Zealand government. *Extracts of Letters from New Zealand* was part of this pamphlet war. Drawn from private communications they throw 'much inner light' on the reaction of Bishop Selwyn and his friends to the situation. The letters were written directly to Mary Anne and Louisa Catherine Palmer in England or as correspondence between their sister Caroline Abraham in Wellington and their cousin Sarah Selwyn in Auckland. The first letters report the clergy's reaction to the outbreak of hostilities and state that a policy of intimidation would never succeed in New Zealand. They deplore the state of Taranaki—'the country laid waste, hundreds ruined, women and children sent off by order of the Commander-in-Chief, to live off the bounty of strangers'—and record the unrest in Auckland and the Waikato. There are also personal anecdotes such as a comment of 'a clear-headed old Maori who asked why the Governor did not follow his own advice to the Maori people to settle disputed land peaceably by arbitration'.<sup>25</sup>

Mary Ann Martin opened her reply to a letter from M. A. P. (28 August) with the comment that she did '... not wonder at your difficulties about beginning at once to agitate' which reveals that the writers knew that the information they were sending would be made available to influential people in England.<sup>26</sup> This accounts for Sarah Selwyn's outburst written two days later and for the personal and detailed accounts of events which make up these two letters. Amongst other things Mary Ann wrote that the Auckland triumvirate<sup>27</sup> had much talk and reported that the Bishop, 'disliking all private communications to people in power', shrank from the proposal that he should write home officially to the Duke of Newcastle and Gladstone. In fact an approach was made to the Colonial Secretary through Sir John Patteson, father of 'Coley' Patteson,