

Bishop of Melanesia.²⁸ Sarah's letter stresses that the Bishop's main objection to the Governor's actions lay in the purchase of Maori land based on individual instead of tribal right, a change in policy that departed from the land guarantee of the Treaty of Waitangi, but added that she did '... not pretend to justify the Maories in all that has followed'. Selwyn was gravely concerned about the result, that the Government had

... rushed into a bloody quarrel without trying all other methods of settling the dispute first; assuming that the natives are rebels before they have done one single thing to prove themselves to be so, and denying them the ordinary privileges of British subjects, which the Treaty of Waitangi declares them to be. . . Oh! we are sinking so low in the eyes of the Maories. Where is our good faith? Where our assurances that the Queen would never do them wrong? . . . it goes to our hearts to see a noble race of people stigmatized as rebel, and driven to desperation, by the misrule of those who are at the same time lowering their own people in their eyes.²⁹

The theme of the Governor's loss of impartiality runs through all the letters as does the belief that things could only be put right by direction from the Imperial Government:

The Governor is strong in the support of the Ministry, the House, and the voice of the foolish people outside. . . and if the Government at home judge by these things, and by the Governor's despatches, they will hesitate before they remove him.³⁰

The letters of 3 and 5 October report satisfaction at the Home Government's refusal of troops but on 30 October Sarah reports a potentially explosive incident near Auckland which the Bishop defused and the fear that 'they have adopted at home the government views about the inevitability of the war'. Mary Ann comments on a good article in the *Saturday Review* of 25 August on the New Zealand Bill but is concerned that '... the *Times* calls these fine people "savages" and the *Guardian* dismisses them with a jaunty sentence, to be exterminated like all "savage races"!'.

Torn between her wish to be with her husband at a time when the Bishop and clergy were experiencing 'great odium by the part they have taken in the matter'³¹ and her desire to be with the two schoolboy sons she had not seen since 1855, Sarah Selwyn sailed for England in the troopship *Boanerges* on 5 February 1861. Before she arrived in Portsmouth in May a debate had taken place in the House of Commons in which Charles Selwyn³² made a 'feeble defence' of the clergy's stand which drew Caroline Abraham's comment '... indifference of the Govt and the Public dumped all our hopes from England. It is clear that the truth is known—the wrong acknowledged but it is now addopted [*sic*] and supported.'³³ In this climate