

during the First World War.

The views of such iwi were balanced by those who adopted a more ready approach to civic responsibility and service. This latter approach stemmed from Article Three of the Treaty of Waitangi, in which the rights of British citizenship, and the duties and obligations it imposed, were imparted to Maori. In times of war, who more than tangata whenua should rush to the defence of the country? Iwi whose sons were first to the recruiting offices included Ngapuhi in the north, Ngai Tahu of the South Island, Ngati Kahungunu of Hawke's Bay, Ngati Porou on the East Coast, and Te Arawa and Ngati Tuwharetoa in the Bay of Plenty and central North Island.

Conscription

Those iwi that were most unresponsive to the Empire's call to fight were from regions where the conflicts of the 1860s had been most bitter and who, as a result, had endured the confiscation of large tracts of their tribal estate – especially those in Waikato and Taranaki. Nursing an inherited sense of grievance against the Crown, represented as they saw it by the government and Pakeha generally, these destitute and aggrieved communities were in no mood to appreciate the obligation to serve abroad in the armed forces.

Because of the reluctance of these iwi to enlist, the government discussed the possibility of applying its conscription policy to them. They had already begun conscripting other New Zealanders into the armed forces, but had not extended the policy to include Maori. As the war drew on it became obvious that the constant need for Maori reinforcements would drain the manpower of some iwi, while others with minimal enlistments would be hardly affected.

In 1917 the government, in an ill-advised move, decided to apply conscription to one electoral district, the Western Maori, of which the Tainui iwi were a part. Ballots were drawn from eligible men of Waikato and Ngati Maniapoto – both Tainui iwi – and intentionally included some members of the Maori king's family. It was hoped that their compliance would encourage would-be dissenters to follow their example.

When none of the men presented themselves at the army office, the Minister of Defence Sir James Allen went to Ngaruawahia in an attempt to persuade Waikato leaders to co-operate. With their men facing imprisonment, Tupu Taingakawa, spokesman for the King and son of Wiremu Tamehana Tarapipi, the Maori kingmaker, received with contempt the olive branch held out by Allen. 'Ko wai te wha?' (who will suffer?), the old chief remarked: 'My people cannot suffer more than they have done in the loss of their lands and of their mana.'¹ Their refusal to serve was not readily understood, and those selected by ballot