

1042. It has been suggested as a ground of your not being qualified as a Resident Magistrate in a purely Native district, that you do not possess an adequate knowledge of the Native language : was any suggestion of that kind made at the time of your appointment, or at any time since ?—Not till now. *F. D. Fenton, Esq.*
16 Oct, 1860.

1043. Have you any objection to state what you consider to be your own qualifications as a Maori scholar ?—I never found the discharge of my duty interfered with by any want of knowledge of the Maori language. Archdeacon Maunsell, who is allowed by all to be the best Maori scholar in the country, in publishing the second edition of his Maori grammar, has asked me to take it through the press.

1044. It has been observed that from your Report and Journal it may be inferred that your course of proceeding in Waikato was not such as to conciliate the older Chiefs: in particular, there is a fact mentioned at page 9, referring to Wiremu Nera; you say of him, that the residents at Whaingaroa did not place any faith in him: will you explain that ?—I can only say that such was the opinion expressed to me at the time of my arrival by the English settlers at Waikato. I was not at that period qualified to express an opinion myself. Subsequently I had constant communication with him, and we treated each other with great confidence.

1045. Did he cooperate with you ?—He did.

1046. Heartily or not ?—Very heartily.

1047. Is he an important chief ?—He is. He is one of the few great men left.

1048. What rank would he hold amongst the Waikato Chiefs ?—Wiremu Nera, Te Waharoa, Potatau, and Kukutai, were about equal in authority. The great man of the last generation, Potatau, derived great influence from his female ancestors. I have taken considerable pains to ascertain the pedigrees of the different leading Waikato Chiefs.

1049. Did you consider it a part of your business to make yourself acquainted with their pedigrees ?—I could have done without it, but I found the knowledge of considerable service. I produce three pedigrees (numbered one and two, the third will be found at the end of my report on the progress of the Maori population). I also produce a list of the tribes of Waikato, which I compiled. They contain the most accurate information I could procure. I cannot vouch for their perfect accuracy. [*Same put in.*]

1050. Are you able to speak then, with a competent knowledge of the relative degrees of importance of the various Chiefs and tribes of Waikato ?—I think I am the only officer of the Government who knows anything about them, except perhaps Mr. Rogan and Mr. Searancke.

1051. You spoke of Potatau: will you state the degree of importance which belonged to him ?—He was a very great man. He was not so much a warrior as a diplomatist.

1052. Was he recognized as having a paramount authority or influence over the other Chiefs of Waikato ?—By no means. On the contrary, in 1836 there was a great slaughter at Kaipaka. Wiremu Nera and his friends took Kaipaka, defended by Potatau's friends. There was a great loss of life there: Wiremu Nera was the conqueror. There have been many other fights in Waikato in which Potatau's people were opposed by the people of other Waikato tribes. The first great meeting at Paetai in May, 1857, commenced with a general reconciliation of these feuds, and of Kaipaka in particular.

1053. Did Potatau ever assert or claim any right or authority generally over the Waikato tribes ?—None, except over his own tribes.

1054. Will you specify his tribes ?—First his own tribe the Ngatimahuta. There were several hapus in this tribe over which other Chiefs exercised more influence than he did. I may mention the Ngatikiriwai, Ngatipari, Ngatitamainu, Ngatihuaki, Ngatitakahia, Ngatitapa, Teiwipoaka, Ngatingahia, and Te Ngaungau. The Chiefs in these hapus exercised more influence over their people than Potatau did. Other hapus of his own tribe he would influence through their principal Chiefs, such as Te Patukohuru, Ngatinawhainga, Ngatikaiawhi, Te Kawerau, Ngatinaho, Ngatiwhau, Ngaitupongo, Te Patukoko, Ngatinainai, Ngatiparihahiara. I might enumerate at great length. There are one hundred and twenty hapus on the paper I produce. There are other tribes again over whom he had no influence beyond that which any great Chief would have, such as Ngatitipa, Tainui, Ngatimahanga, Ngatiruru, Ngatihorua, Ngatiraukawa. This latter tribe are not properly Waikato, although they are now recognized as such by long residence. There are again other tribes over whom he exercised more influence, such as Ngatimaniapoto, Ngatihinetu, Ngatiapakura, Ngatipou, Ngatihine.

1055. Are there many tribes in Waikato which did not acknowledge Potatau's influence ?—I have already mentioned the names of almost every great tribe in Waikato.

1056. Do we understand then that there were tribes in Waikato that did not recognise some degree of influence on the part of Potatau ?—It is a very difficult question to answer. Every great Chief has influence in his district. Other great Chiefs in Waikato had as much as Potatau, excluding those in his own particular tribes that I have mentioned. I should not like however to be too general in the statement, as by so doing I might fall into error. We cannot make distinctions which the Natives do not recognize themselves.

1057. What were the circumstances, as far as you know, which led to the nomination of Potatau as King ?—I am not clear where he was put forward, whether it was at Wanganui or Taupo. I am not certain the nomination did not originate in Waikato. He had been spoken of as King before I was stationed in the district. If a prominent Chief had been proposed for King by Waikato, in Waikato, I think Potatau would have been the man. Waharoa and Kukutai were dead, and it only remained between Wiremu Nera and Potatau. I know that Wiremu Nera was once solicited to be King himself, but he would not have anything to do with the movement.