

Capt. C. J. Johnstone.

22 Oct. 1860.

1432. And not till then?—I think not.

1433. Before the recent war at Taranaki, were the Natives impressed with a sense of the supremacy of British power?—In arts, but not in arms. They never recognized our military supremacy.

1434. That being so, to what circumstances do you attribute the long continuance of peaceful relations between the two races?—They looked upon us as their servants, whose presence was profitable to them.

1435. Do you mean a permissive occupation?—I should rather speak of them as regarding us as tenants at will. They have for some time become alarmed at the great increase of European population. They now think we have become unruly, and think of ejecting us.

1436. You think before we can acquire the fee simple of our own lands, we must decidedly establish our military supremacy?—I do.

1437. And you think then that any attempt to introduce civil institutions recognizing the Queen as supreme, would be unsuccessful?—I do: I mean in Native districts.

1438. Are you of opinion that there are any measures of a remedial nature which could be practically applied now?—The Chiefs should be conciliated. The Governor should go among them and bestow rewards on those who can exhibit the neatest cottages and cultivations. They should be allowed to lease their lands. They should be persuaded and paid to make roads. I even think they should be encouraged to cultivate some amusement. Their present craving for excitement has been partly caused by the discouragement of all diversion among them. I believe if Government had given £100 a year to encourage racing at Rangiaowhia, it would have done more to preserve the peace of that district than their having appointed a representative from each of the learned professions as a magistrate there, which was done. Ploughing matches and prize shows would have a beneficial effect, and excitement to acquire the material comforts of life.

1439. What provision would you make to enable them to settle disputes and punish crime?—Increase the authority of the Chiefs, and, when circumstances will admit of it, magistrates of great experience and knowledge of the language and customs should visit them when requested.

1440. *Mr. Williamson.*] Are they willing now to lease their land?—I do not think they would, even if the Government would permit it.

1441. How would you propose to permit them to lease their lands?—Private individuals would be able to do that better than the Government. There would be no difficulty in obtaining land on lease.

1442. Were you present at the Ngaruawahia meeting in May last?—At part of it.

1443. Are you aware that one of the decisions come to at that meeting was that no European should be permitted to lease lands from Natives within the King's territory?—I am; but I think if private individuals were authorized to make offers to them (peace being restored) they would agree to it.

1444. When you first became acquainted with the country, what mode of settling disputes was in use among the Natives?—By talking, chiefly; occasionally by a *taua*, especially in cases of adultery.

1445. Did you ever hear them express themselves as dissatisfied at this mode of settling their disputes, and desirous of a better?—I have said that the *taua* has almost fallen into disuse. I have heard them express a desire for better social institutions. Their favorite expression is religion, law, and love.

1446. Was this before the appointment of Mr. Fenton as magistrate, or subsequently?—Before.

1447. Were you aware of any instance in which the Natives expressed their willingness to refer their disputes to the magistrate, after Mr. Fenton's appointment?—Not to Mr. Fenton personally; but runangas generally came into great favor, to my deep regret, because I believe the worst habit the Maories have, that of living in a state of communism, is fostered by the whole population of a settlement, men, women, and children passing a night in a Court-house or any other house.

1448. Do you prefer the old system of *taua* to that?—Immorality was less under that, but I could have no preference in such a matter. I consider both equally bad.

1449. I understood you to say that four years ago you considered a collision inevitable?—I did so.

1450. Do you think that no precautions of a civil nature could have averted that?—The remedial measures I have suggested might have done so, but I do not think anything would.

1451. You think, then, that the primary object of the King movement was not law and order, but was national independence?—I think it was a stand for national independence originally suggested by Europeans.

1452. Since the desire for law was so strongly put forward by some of its leaders, especially Tarapipipi, do you not think that a system giving them law and order under the Government, would have detached many of its powerful supporters from it?—Probably it might; but the first homicide of a Maori, accidentally or otherwise, would have been sufficient to reunite the tribes against us.

1453. Even though provision should have been made in this system to meet this case of homicide?—I do not think they would have submitted to it.

1454. Do you think that from the consolidation of the King party a year ago the only course for the Government to adopt was to prepare for a conflict and to provide for meeting it in the best possible manner?—Yes; but at the same time to use every possible exertion to avert it by remedial measures.

* * * * *