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24 Oct. 1860.

1651. *Mr. Williamson.*] I think you stated on a former occasion that the influence of the older Chiefs is still very great; have you observed any recent proof of this, and, if so, will you state the particulars?—I consider that the safety of the Colony depends very much on the position taken by the older Chiefs. I may state from reliable information gathered on the spot, that recently, if it had not been for the old Chief at Orakei (Kawau), and Tamati Ngapora at Mangere, * * * * * An old Chief of the party appealed to them and said, "Look to the old Chief at Orakei, and look to the old Chief at Mangere, and look to Te Tiki at Pukaki, and give up all such ideas." These Chiefs have throughout exercised a greater amount of influence for the safety of Auckland than is generally known, or sufficiently appreciated. At the great meeting at Ngaurawahia, the old Chief Kawau, who lives near Auckland, had given orders to his tribe to be prepared to defend Auckland from any Native attack. I could mention other instances in illustration, if it would not take up the time of the Committee: these are recent. The words of Potatau were also very much the cause of the Waikato proper not joining in the war at Taranaki:—"Kaua te aha, kaua te aha; kia atawhai ki te pakeha (Let nothing be done against the Europeans; treat them kindly)."

1652. Prior to your tendering advice to the Governor to suspend the proceedings of Mr. Fenton in Waikato, had any intimation been made to you by other persons besides Potatau (Native Chiefs or Europeans) that his proceedings were calculated to lead to dangerous consequences?—Yes; I can say in reply to that question that very many representations were made to me at that time, by Natives from the Waikato, some of whom favoured Mr. Fenton's proceedings very much; and I gathered from them, as well as from those opposed to his proceedings, the actual state of the Waikato. I did so also from Europeans coming in from Waikato. The names of the Natives are particularly Hetaraka, Wiremu Nera te Awaitaia, and Ta Kerei te Rau: these are the leading men; there were others of the Ngatimahuta tribe; and I can produce letters to the Committee showing the state of party feeling existing at Waikato at the time. (*See below.*)

1653. *Mr. Sewell.*] Do the Committee understand that the Chiefs you have named recommended Mr. Fenton's withdrawal?—They only stated the excitement existing to me: they said nothing of Mr. Fenton's withdrawal. But the people at Mangere did; they are not actually in the Waikato, but they represented at that time the entire feeling of the majority of the Waikato people.

1654. Do you recollect a letter having been addressed to you, as Native Secretary, by the Rev. Mr. Riemenschneider, dated 24th September 1855, directing attention to a strong suspicion existing in the Native mind, especially in the Taranaki district, as to designs of the Europeans to obtain possession of their lands?—I had several very valuable communications with Mr. Riemenschneider both at that time and subsequently. I requested him to furnish me with information as to the state of the Native mind in the Taranaki district. I cannot be certain I have the particular letter referred to in my possession: but I will look for it and endeavour to produce it.

1655. *Mr. Domett.*] Was Mr. Fenton ever instructed by you, or from your office, to endeavour to conciliate the old Chiefs, and so gain their co-operation in his proceedings?—I cannot recollect exactly whether any instructions of that kind were ever given him from my office; but at the time he was stationed at Waikato he was instructed by the Colonial Treasurer.

1656. Are you aware whether the Governor ever gave him such advice?—I believe the Governor did give such advice, and that Mr. Fenton was aware that the Native Department, of which he was a member himself at one time, made it a principle that the old Chiefs should be conciliated on all occasions.

1657. Was he ever advised to prepare the Native mind for the attainment of the objects he proposed, by adopting the principle of nomination by Government instead of popular election?—I think that is already replied to.

1658. Are there any other documents you wish to put in?—I wish to put in an extract of a Despatch of the Governor's, dated 13th June, 1859; a Memorandum of the Native Secretary's, dated 16th September, 1857, and Acting Native Secretary, dated 8th March, 1856; and Extract from Report of Mr. Turton.

[*Witness produced these documents: same read as follows.*]

EXTRACT FROM DESPATCH FROM HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE, TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DATED 13TH JUNE, 1859.

"When I visited the Waikato district about two years ago, the agitation for the election of a King was commencing there. I went up the Waikato in a war canoe belonging to Potatau, which was steered by his son. I had interviews with the Natives described in my despatch No. 40 of 9th May, 1857, and Potatau gave me an assurance that he would control the then probable movement: that he had no desire to be a King, and that he would always be a faithful subject of Her Majesty; and I have every reason to believe that he has adhered to his promise.

At the time alluded to I appointed Mr. Fenton to be Magistrate of that district, this officer being enthusiastic in his desire to introduce law amongst the Natives. It soon, however, appeared that the tribes of the Waikato were divided into two parties; the one chose Potatau as their head, and were composed of all the old and important Chiefs; the other consisted of young men, who called themselves the Queen's party, and desired to be assimilated to the English. I will not assert that Mr. Fenton's indiscretion was the cause of this formation of two distinct parties in his district, because it is possible that this movement was beyond his control, but he unwisely allied himself to the latter party.