

FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO NATIVE AFFAIRS.

No. 1.

BISHOP OF WAIAPU TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

Auckland, June 5th, 1861.

SIR,—

I venture to address a letter to Your Excellency, upon the difficulties of the Native question, though it be at the risk of being charged with interfering with that which does not belong to my province. And yet I feel that every Englishman is bound to promote to the utmost the establishment of a better feeling between the two races which inhabit this country.

An attentive examination of the past history of the Colony will at once shew that the grand reason for distrust on the part of the Natives has been a conviction that their country was about to be taken from them, not in the way of fair purchase, but by force. At the meeting held at Waitangi, in the Bay of Islands, in February, 1840, where the conditions of the Treaty of Watangi were laid before the assembled Natives, certain Chiefs of great influence objected to them, stating that the Treaty would deprive them of their lands, that it was smooth and oily, but treachery was hidden under it. On occasion of the outbreak under Heke, in the year 1844, Heke states in a letter to the Governor "The white people said to me 'John Heke, your land is taken by the Governor.' I replied, 'By what means is it taken?' The white people answered, 'By the flagstaff which stands at Maiki.'" Blue Book, 1845.

No uneasiness, however, was occasioned to the Natives by the old land purchases made before the Government was established, for Mr. Shortland, in a letter to Lord Stanley, shewing that the disturbances at the South had originated in the interference of the Company, or their settlers, with land never sold by the rightful owners, says that, "in the Northern district, out of 750 claims of the old settlers, which had been adjudicated by the Commissioners, not one single instance of any objection being offered by the Natives to the taking possession of the lands awarded to the claimants had arisen." Papers laid before Parliament, March 7, 1845.

At the South, the case was very different. The proceedings of the New Zealand Company appear to have been unsound from the commencement. The object of the principal agent of the Company was to present a good report to his constituents in England, and a representation was made that the greater part of the country had been purchased by him, extending from the 38th to the 43rd degree of latitude on the West coast, and from the 41st to the 43rd degree of Latitude on the East coast. But, when the details came to be entered into, there were fearful difficulties at every step. For convenience, I refer to the summary given in Thomson's *Story of New Zealand*; but all his statements may be verified by the Blue Books. "The first location of the Company's settlers was at Port Nicholson, at the mouth of the River Hutt; but this location having been found to be inconvenient, the town was removed to the opposite side of the Harbour, and was called Wellington. Unfortunately this place was inhabited by Natives, who strongly protested against the settlers appropriating land used by them for cultivation. They denied having sold the land, and told the settlers they were acting unjustly. But no physical resistance was offered to the erection of houses, as the Natives were informed by persons collecting signatures for the Treaty of Watangi, that Her Majesty's Government would send magistrates to see justice done them." Thomson, vol. 2, p. 24.

The Company's settlements which followed that of Wellington were Whanganui, in 1840; New Plymouth and Nelson, in 1841. It is not necessary that I should refer to the particulars of the disputes which arose in those districts respectively, together with the fearful massacre at Wairau, and the contest in the valley of the Hutt. They were all occasioned by wholesale purchases made by the New Zealand Company, which, upon examination, were pronounced by the Commissioners to be for the most part invalid. The effect upon the Native mind was at first a distrust in the proceedings of the Company, but afterwards satisfaction, when they found that justice was done to them by the Government.

In the meantime, the purchases which were effected directly by the agents of the Government were executed upon a different principle. The greatest publicity was given. Opportunity was afforded for all objectors to assert the grounds of objection; and no transaction was considered to be complete, so long as disputed claims were pending. These purchases were made chiefly in the neighbourhood of Auckland, and further North.

The purchases which have been made for the last ten years have been effected, I believe, by the present Land Commissioner, or by those who act under his direction. The earliest of these, including the extensive valley of Wairarapa, and other large blocks in the Province of Napier, were made with the general concurrence of the Natives. At least, having been connected with the Natives of that district, I have not heard any dissatisfaction expressed. But, I am sorry to say, I cannot speak with equal satisfaction of other purchases which have followed. In the year