

H. S. Wardell, Esq.

It is this desire for independence, together with a conviction of the necessity for combination in order to prevent the extension of European settlement and influence, that has given rise to the "King" movement. I attach but small comparative importance to the various grievances which are, at times, put forward by the "King" Natives as reasons for their movement, such as complaints of the way in which particular blocks of land have been acquired for the Crown; of the restrictions on the sale of fire arms, &c., and the like.

With regard to their conduct towards Europeans, I feel bound to say that the "King" Natives are, for the most part, more just and honorable than the others: a circumstance I attribute to the fact that their Runanga, which is generally governed in its decisions by the broad principles of justice, exercises over them a control to which other Natives are not subject.

The Natives generally, in Wairarapa, condemn the course pursued by the Government in reference to Waitara; complaining that fighting was commenced without first taking the opinion of the Natives, as a people, on the subject. This complaint, however, appears to have a close connection with their claim to independence, as it assumes that the Government ought to treat with them as a people, and not individually as subjects of the Crown.

There are two or three complaints often made by Natives of both parties in this district, which I consider deserve serious consideration. First, against the restrictions on the sale and leasing of land; second, that no tribunal has been established for the settlement of their disputes about land; and, third, that the Government has failed to interpose the strong arm for the prevention of fighting between hostile tribes.

I have also heard them complain that the Government has neglected to punish Native offenders, especially when Natives have been the sufferers: that, in fact, it has never asserted its right to govern Natives by attempting to enforce the law amongst them in their own districts.

There are, also, many complaints of a more local character, to which I ought, perhaps, allude. They chiefly have reference to land purchases. The Natives complain, that great delay takes place in surveying their Reserves, and in the completion of the purchase of lands sold, by which they are kept in debt. They complain, also, that many promises made to them, when first induced to sell their land, have not been fulfilled. They complain, that the proper persons have not always received the payment for lands sold, but overlook the fact that this has resulted, too often, from an intentional withholding of information on their part, for the purpose of afterwards disputing the sale or obtaining a further payment.

Considerable discontent exist at their position as compared with what it was before they sold their land to the Crown; they were then, they say, courted, and could obtain money and credit, while now they can obtain neither, not perceiving that their indolence and extravagance have been the cause of the change.

I find I am unable to complete in time for this mail the tables to which I have referred as enclosed; but will forward them by the earliest opportunity, together with some further remarks which I am preparing, by way of extending my report as to the condition of the Natives in the Wairarapa district up to the present time.

I am informed that Mr. Baker, the Interpreter to the Resident Magistrate's Court here, has reported on the state of the Natives in this neighbourhood, and forwarded particulars of the subdivisions of their tribes.

I have, &c.,

The Native Secretary,
Auckland.

HERBERT S. WARDELL,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 15.

NELSON.

REPORT FROM MR. ASSISTANT NATIVE SECRETARY MACKAY.

J. Mackay, Esq.

Assistant Native Secretary's Office,
Collingwood, 19th August, 1861.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, requesting me to report on the state of the Aboriginal Natives of Nelson and Marlborough.

Your letter came to hand late on the 17th, and I have been so busily engaged to-day as Resident Magistrate, that I have not had time to bestow on it that attention which its importance demands. But, as there will be no other opportunity for me to write by before the Auckland mail leaves Nelson, I would beg to state for the information of his Excellency the Governor, that I have every confidence in the loyalty and good feeling of the Native population of the Provinces of Nelson and Marlborough, and feel assured that I can carry out any policy which his Excellency may please to direct, as the Natives are quite amenable to British law; and, I am happy to say, are generally willing to be guided by my decision in matters of dispute.

I will, by the earliest opportunity, furnish a detailed report as requested by you.

I have, &c.,

The Native Secretary,
Auckland.

JAMES MACKAY, JUNR.,
Assistant Native Secretary.