

aside a block of land for that purpose, they again unanimously declined to adopt any other course than to leave the entire settlement of the lands to the Governor * * * * and to receive back so much as His Excellency shall think proper to restore.

As these terms were then accepted, I conceive that this has become an absolute treaty engagement.

Subsequent to these terms being made at Tauranga with the Natives who had been in rebellion, a number of the loyal Natives went to Auckland to arrange more fully the carrying them out, and on the 18th August further promises were made :

1. That surveyors should be sent back with them.
2. That roads should be commenced, and the Natives be employed on them.
3. That European settlers should speedily be sent.
4. That Crown Grants should be issued to the Natives, &c.

And as it was found that any block of land which the Government might take by way of confiscation would be embarrassed by claims to particular pieces, preferred by loyal members of the tribe, a purchase was made from these to include all lands belonging to the sellers, which the Government might take at three shillings per acre, and £1,000 was paid on account of this purchase, a sum which, at the price named, is likely to cover any claims they have on the block required by the Government, which it was given out and understood was for the settlement of the 1st Waikato Regiment.

That regiment was then moved to Tauranga, and has always been given to understand that it would be settled on its land there, and the officers have in some instances been encouraged to incur outlay with a view to their permanent location.

The writer of this paper was employed to conduct the surveys, and in fulfilment of the promises of the Government, he returned to Tauranga with the Natives, accompanied by several assistants.

On arrival there, the Natives everywhere near the sea appeared most anxious for the surveys to be advanced rapidly, and for the Military Settlers to be located immediately. But as no further steps were taken by the Government to assume possession of the land, or to adjudicate upon it, or even to define its status by proclamation, as only very vague instructions were given to the surveyor, and as his camp was frequently visited by the Natives still in arms, against whom he had no protection whatever, it was impossible to push the surveys with any vigour, and when William Thompson Te Waharoa warned the writer not to extend his surveys inland, he had no course but to obey, and the Government approved of his having done so.

Thus the surveys at Tauranga have been confined to laying off two townships in acre sections at Te Papa and Te Puna, and the subdivision of the seaboard lands between those positions into fifty acre sections.

It is impossible to deny that this long delay in taking any decisive steps at Tauranga is at variance with the spirit of the engagement made in August, 1864, and that it has been productive of consequences unfavourable to the credit of the Government in the eyes of the Natives, and which may be the source of serious embarrassments hereafter. Had the whole Ngaiterangi territory been promptly proclaimed under the Settlements Act, and formal possession of it taken by the occupation of two or three commanding and very defensible positions which effectually cover the seaboard lands from the interior, the Ngaiterangi tribe would then to a man have cheerfully acquiesced, and opposition from Ngatihaua would have been hopeless. The occupation of the front land would have enabled the 1st Waikatos to have been settled on these sections long before this, and the division of the great bulk of the land among the Natives, with clear individual titles, would have remedied all inequalities in the burden of confiscation, would have extinguished for ever their fatal land feuds, and would have so enriched them as to stifle any latent dissatisfaction with so new an order of things. As it is—the Natives, disappointed in their expectations of prompt action on the part of the Government, and wearied by the long interval of absolute uncertainty as to the tenure of their lands, have gradually relaxed from the fervent loyalty they had adopted after Te Ranga. The Pirirakau, and other outlying hapus, have adopted the Paimarire faith (but without any offensive disposition). Wm. Thompson, who, in his letters to the writer, had fully assented to the surveying of Te Puna, has since written to Colonel Greer announcing his intention to dispute its occupation; and affairs appear to be drifting back into the confusion which first led the Ngaiterangi into the King party, in despair of obtaining a solution of their difficulties by any other means.

The coming into operation of the Native Lands Act before any final arrangement was made of the Ngaiterangi lands has created a further difficulty, the loyal Natives now hope to get more than 3s. an acre for their lands, and they have been tempted into several negotiations for their sale to settlers, though evidently precluded from doing so by their engagements with the Government.

It is now more than ever necessary that some step should be immediately taken by the Government to terminate this confusion and uncertainty.

The courses possible to the Government appear to be confined to two:—

1. To carry out the original engagement, both towards the Natives and the Waikato Militia, in their integrity; or,
2. To remove the Waikato Regiment and locate them elsewhere, and to leave the settlement of the Native land questions to the operation of the Native Lands Court.

The only serious objections to the first course seem to be—

1. That the only site for the principal town is in the hands of the Church Mission, and that they refuse to part with it on any terms to which the Government could accede.
2. The difficulty and possible risk of exercising the power of confiscation, and of adjusting the apportionment of the lands not confiscated, and the cost of surveying and issuing Crown Grants for the lands of loyal Natives; and,

3. The necessity, as a prudent precaution, of taking formal possession of the land as a preliminary step.

The answers to these are—