

No. 6.

TAURANGA.

REPORT from H. T. CLARKE, Esq., Civil Commissioner, Tauranga.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt, yesterday, of your letter of date quoted in the margin, requesting me to furnish, for the information of His Excellency Sir G. F. Bowen, a general report giving the fullest information I am able to afford on the present state of the Natives in my district. H. T. Clarke, Esq.

In endeavouring to comply with your request I would beg of the Government to look upon this as an *ad interim* report. My present numerous and pressing engagements prevent my giving that time and proper attention to the subject which it demands.

In this report I purpose to embrace the Resident Magistrate's districts of Tauranga, Maketu, Taupo, and Opotiki, over which I am at present acting as Civil Commissioner. As indicated in your letter, I will first "deal with the facts which have come under my own immediate cognizance in the position I have occupied under the Government."

In the year 1860 I was appointed to the Bay of Plenty districts as Resident Magistrate. The "King movement," as it was called, had taken a definite form in the Waikato districts by the setting up of the old chief Potatau as Maori King.

The causes out of which this disaffection is alleged to have arisen, as related to me by Wiremu Tamehana Te Waharoa himself, the active promoter of the movement, were the following:—

1. The Natives objected to the "Treaty of Waitangi;" to the manner in which signatures were obtained to it; their ignorance, at the time of signing, of its purport and ultimate tendency.

2. That they were constantly disturbed by quarrels among themselves which, in many cases, had resulted in an appeal to arms and the loss of many lives. That the Government looked upon these with apparent unconcern, as they took no steps to prevent their recurrence.

3. They complained of the manner in which the land sales were conducted; that the Natives blindly (*matapo*) sold their lands for a nominal price; that these lands were again resold by the Government at high prices, and that they considered that they were entitled to this advanced price and not the Government. That they were alarmed at the rapid rate at which their lands were passing away from them into the hands of the foreigner; they feared they would soon either be (*ngaro*) lost amongst the Pakeha, or cease to be a race.

4. And, as if to confirm the Natives in their opinion, they were informed that it had been proposed by the Queen's Council that all the waste lands of the Natives should be treated as demesne lands of the Crown.

5. That, under these circumstances, it was absolutely necessary for the well-being of the Maori race, that they should have a King, a Council, and Magistrates of their own.

Every exertion was made by the zealous supporters of the Maori King to have his authority recognized by all the tribes of New Zealand, and to this end emissaries were sent in all directions. Shortly before my arrival in Tauranga these agents of the King had gained a favorable hearing, and had succeeded in forming a strong party in their favor. The "Queen party," as the loyal Natives were called, were greatly in the minority. Many of the *hapus* remained nominally neutral. No active opposition against the Government was raised by the King party at this time; they professed to be under the control of Wiremu Tamehana. All the lands of the adherents of the Maori King were handed over to the safe keeping of their head.

In October, 1860, the first symptoms of active disaffection began to show themselves. War was being carried on at Taranaki, and many of the King party, under Te Reweti Manotini and Rotoehu, both chiefs of Tauranga, went to the scene of strife to assist their countrymen; they returned to the district, early the following year, the confirmed opponents of the Government. Every attempt to carry out the views of the Government for their benefit was regarded with suspicion and systematically opposed. But in spite of this unfavorable state of things the party in favor of law and order under the Queen's Government gradually increased. Many chiefs who had given in their allegiance to the Maori King began to waver, and held a neutral position, watching the course of events.

When the war broke out in Waikato in 1863 the majority of the Tauranga Natives were decidedly in favor of peace. The minority, under the chiefs Reweti and Rotoehu, determined again to make common cause with their countrymen in Waikato; meetings were held to try and dissuade them from their purpose, but without avail.

A deputation of Tauranga chiefs went up to Auckland and waited on His Excellency Sir George Grey. The deputation begged that troops might not be sent to Tauranga, that they would undertake to keep all hostile Natives from entering the port. On these assurances being made Sir George Grey promised them that troops should not occupy Tauranga. Two months had hardly elapsed, however, before it became known that Tauranga was made the port for all the disaffected Natives on the East Coast. Men, arms, and ammunition were continually passing up the harbour destined for the seat of war at Waikato. Tauranga was occupied by our troops. Shortly after, the majority of the Tauranga Natives took up arms against us; some, even, of the chiefs who had waited on the Governor, giving as a reason for so doing that their love for their island and people was so great they could not remain any longer passive spectators.

In taking this step they did not act hastily; they did not conceal the state of their feelings; every endeavour was made to induce them to remain quiet; they were warned that their lands would be forfeited, but all without avail: such was their infatuation that they believed themselves able to cope with our troops, and eventually drive them from the country. Our losses at the Gate Pa encouraged this belief and gained them fresh adherents.

The fight at Te Ranga in June, 1864, in which they left nearly one-third of their number, including their principal chiefs and leaders, dead on the field of battle, convinced them of the hopelessness of the struggle, and induced them to submit. They lost their leading chiefs Rawiri Puhirake, Timoti, Te Reweti Manotini, Rotoehu, Henare Taratoa, and Titipa.