

7. It will be seen that the question of the proper method of dealing at the present crisis with the King movement, as well as with the confiscated lands, is now engaging the earnest consideration of the Colonial Government.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Earl Granville, K.G.

G. F. BOWEN.

P.S.—15th March.—I regret to state that since the above Despatch was written, a report has reached Wellington of fresh murders having been perpetrated by the rebel Maoris—this time near Opotoki, on the East Coast of the North Island. The details will not be known here until after the departure on this day of the monthly Suez mail. In my “Confidential” Despatch of the 7th December ultimo (paragraph 14), I wrote as follows:—“It may appear strange to superficial or ill-informed observers that the English settlers in the North Island are unable of themselves to subdue the Maoris, seeing that their numbers are as two to one,—about 80,000 Colonists to 40,000 Maoris. But it will be remembered that the Maoris were not subjugated during the years when an English army of nearly ten thousand (10,000) regular soldiers, in addition to the Colonial forces, was employed in this island. Moreover the great majority of the settlers in New Zealand are emigrants from the labouring classes in England, and had probably never carried arms of any kind until they found themselves enrolled in the Colonial Militia. On the other hand every Maori is a born soldier, strong, fleet, and intrepid, accustomed from his infancy to the use of weapons and to the sight of blood, and trained to great skill in bush-fighting by the guerilla warfare of the last eight years. Again, the Colonists occupy settlements placed along and near the sea shore—they occupy as it were the circumference of a circle, whereas the Maoris are entrenched in the most impenetrable mountains and forests in the centre, whence they can send forth forays in every direction. It will be further recollected that in 1745, 4,000 Highlanders easily conquered all Scotland, except the few fortified posts garrisoned by English troops, although the Lowlanders were infinitely more numerous in comparison to the Celts than the British Colonists in New Zealand are in comparison to the Maoris, and though the Lowlanders also were excited against their assailants by the animosities which sprang from differences of race, language, and religion.

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“So British authority would have been practically annihilated if the British troops had been removed from Scotland during the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and if the Hanoverians had joined the Jacobite clans. So, too, the English would have been driven out of all India (except, perhaps, the Presidency cities) in 1857, if the European army had been withdrawn, and if the Sikhs, together with the Nizam and the other loyal Native princes, had joined the Sepoy mutineers. The Bishop of Lichfield (Dr. Selwyn) has remarked on more than one occasion, that there is, in the present condition of this Colony, nothing which is new to the student of the history of other countries where formidable aborigines had recently been brought into contact with alien invaders or settlers.”

2. To the above remarks it may be added that very much depends during the present crisis on the personal action of the so-called Maori King. There is a comparatively small number of women and children among the Maoris; but it is estimated that if Tawhiao were to put himself at the head of the general rising of his race, he could bring from 10,000 to 15,000 practised guerilla soldiers from the central highlands against the European settlements. Now of the 80,000 Europeans of both sexes and all ages in the North Island, about 30,000 live in the five principal towns of Wellington, Auckland, Napier, Taranaki, and Wanganui, of which the four last are still garrisoned by detachments of the 18th Regiment. The remaining 50,000 Europeans are dispersed in solitary farms or small hamlets, chiefly near a coast line as long as that of Ireland. The enrolled Militia and Volunteers (embracing the bulk of the adult European population capable of bearing arms, but practically available only for the defence of their respective districts), number about 9,000 officers and men. After diligent recruiting throughout New Zealand and in Australia, the Colonial Government has been unable to raise its permanent