

Maoris as payment for the gum, flax, and other things, which Maoris produce. The word is with you, my father. The light I send to you from my lighthouse is in this word, "Consent."

If you agree, I shall know that the sunshine of peace will rest, not only on the summit of the mountains, but that very soon it will illumine all the hills and valleys of this land.

From your friend,
J. C. FIRTH.

Enclosure 5 in No. 2.—(H.)

Mr. J. C. FIRTH to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Auckland, 25th July, 1870.

On various occasions I have communicated information of more or less value to successive Governments regarding Native opinions and movements in my part of the interior. In doing so, I have never condescended to act the part of a spy upon the Natives, but, when occasion called for it, have accompanied my information by recommendations calculated to promote a cordial feeling of goodwill between the two races, without which a lasting peace cannot be established.

During a recent visit to Matamata, I became acquainted with certain movements now in progress amongst the adherents of the King. Though probably much safer to myself to remain silent, entirely at the mercy of the Natives as I am at Matamata, I shall pursue in this instance the policy I have always followed, and I now lay before you certain information which I think, in the interests of both races, you, as Native and Defence Minister, ought to know. Accompanying this information, I shall lay before you such representations as the circumstances appear to me to warrant.

1. A meeting of Natives, more or less secret, has been summoned to be held at Tokangamutu.

2. On my way to Matamata I met a party of Natives of the King section of the Ngatihaua Tribe on their way to Tokangamutu, under the leadership of Pokoroa, a near relative of the late William Thompson, and, as you are probably aware, an old chief of the highest rank and greatest influence in that part of the interior. This chief (who was accompanied by the most influential persons of his division of Ngatihaua) informed me that they had been sent for by the authorities at Tokangamutu, and that they had been told to abandon their settlements on the Upper Thames, and go to cultivate near Tokangamutu. In accordance with these instructions they were then migrating, men, women, and children. He did not acquaint me with the object of this general movement to Tokangamutu. He said he did not know whether it would be peace or war; but he added that he had sufficient influence with Manuwhiri (Tawhiao's chief adviser) to enable him to give me and my people at Matamata timely warning if Waikato were to be attacked, and that he would certainly warn me if necessary.

3. I afterwards learnt that when the King's messenger told these people to go to Tokangamutu, one of the leading chiefs said, "Why does Manuwhiri desire us to go to Tokangamutu? If it be only to raise food, we can do that at Ohineroa (their village); but if he desires us to help him to fight for Waikato, then we will go." The messenger is stated to have replied, "That is the object; go."

4. The messenger then went to Ohinemuri, with (it is stated) a similar message for Ngatimaru. Before my departure from Matamata, I learnt that a considerable body of Ngatimaru were coming up the Waikato River with the intention of proceeding to Tokangamutu.

5. I have also been informed that a King's messenger had induced the inhabitants of a kainga in the Mercury Bay district to migrate to Tokangamutu, with the object of attacking Waikato and destroying the Europeans. Before departing, these Natives are said to have burnt their houses, chopped down their peach trees, and destroyed the property they were unable to carry away with them. This latter information came to me through an independent and reliable channel, and significantly confirms the facts I have previously detailed.

6. I presume you have been made acquainted with the circumstance that a deputation of Arawa recently visited Tokangamutu, and that Topia has declared his intention to return to that place and resume his allegiance to the King.

7. The plundering of Messrs. Ilbury's store at Aotea has doubtless had your fullest attention. It may have been either an ordinary robbery under strong temptation, or the Maori mode of telling Messrs. Ilbury and Co. to withdraw from that part of the country, or it may have been a challenge—a throwing down the gauntlet to the Government. In any case, the wisest course would have been to have passed over the affair without notice. Should it have been in any sense a political defiance, I think it may be extremely unfortunate if the despatch to Raglan of eight Constabulary, under Sub-Inspector Kenny, should be regarded by the King party as an acceptance of the challenge. To me, the most peculiar circumstance in connection with this affair is the fact that your correspondent at Tokangamutu was quite ignorant of the robbery of Ilbury's store until he heard of the outrage at Alexandra, several days after the information had appeared in the Auckland newspapers, though the act was done by the King's own tribe (Ngatimahutu) within a short day's ride of your correspondent's residence on the Waipa River. This remarkable ignorance of an important occurrence may not be ominous, but it is at least singular.

8. In relation to the various circumstances I have now detailed, I think it is of importance to remember, that when the late William Thompson visited Wellington in 1866, at the request of Sir George Grey, his demand was, "Give me back Waikato." That the loss of Waikato, though sullenly acquiesced in hitherto, still rankles in the hearts of the King party at Tokangamutu, and they have constantly reiterated Thompson's demand. I am no alarmist, for, in connection with Maori affairs, I have too frequently been brought face to face with both difficulty and danger of no common order to be much affected by either. Therefore, I but express my calm and deliberate conviction when I say that, unless some means be found of establishing peace, or of preserving the present armed truce until such time as our increased population shall have rendered the attempt perfectly hopeless, I believe that sooner or later the King party will attempt to regain Waikato by force. If history teaches one lesson more plainly than another, it is, that lands obtained by force must be held by force. The conquest of Waikato by Imperial troops is not likely to furnish an exception. Since the occupation of Waikato by us, there