

different system has really been pursued at Motueka from that at Otaki it would be important to ascertain what that system was and by whom carried on, for the word "system" must be meant to convey something more than the accidental contact of the Natives with the settlers. But I altogether deny the assumption that a different system has been carried on there. The writers seem to have wholly overlooked the fact that the Natives there have been under the guidance and influence of missionaries. Within a very few months after the establishment of the settlement at Nelson a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, the late Rev. C. L. Reay, was located there, and he made it his constant practice to encourage the Natives in the district in habits of industry; and during the last three years the Rev. T. L. Tudor has been residing in their immediate neighbourhood and assisting them with his advice and encouragement. They had also, previous to the arrival of settlers, been some years under the instruction of missionaries, though no missionary resided among them. Moreover, in reference to the very subject the writers of the letter have chosen as a test of civilisation—the cultivation of wheat—I have a distinct recollection that Mr. Reay, in a letter published some years ago at Nelson, but to which I have not now access, asserted that the Natives of Motueka had been taught and encouraged to grow wheat by Natives who went there from this district who had seen it grown here; and I am able myself to mention the Native who went from Waikanae, and who was their principal instructor in agriculture; his name is Himiona te Wehi. He was an excellent ploughman, having received his instruction on the Mission Farm at Waimate, near the Bay of Islands. Therefore, it is not a fact that two different systems have been pursued, and consequently the great quantity of wheat grown at Motueka proves nothing in support of the proposition contended for in the letter. It was not the result of mere contact with settlers, however advantageous that may have been.

As to the statements concerning Otaki, I can only say that some clerical error must exist in the official returns as to the wheat grown here on which those statements seem to be grounded. Five acres is mentioned as the quantity grown last year. But the fact that a water-mill with two pairs of stones, which has been erected at the cost of several hundred pounds by the Natives, and that another is in progress, all the materials having been purchased and being on the spot, must be sufficient to convince anybody that "five" acres is not the average annual amount of wheat cultivated at Otaki. But supposing the case, as stated in the letter, to be generally correct, are there no reasons why the Natives of Motueka may have grown more wheat than those of Otaki without having recourse to the imaginary ones therein advanced? The writers, indeed, anticipate this very obvious question by saying, "Your Lordship has two entire districts before you, similar in most respects, inhabited by Natives of the very same tribes." I must here remark, in the first place, that the country at Motueka is much more available for the plough than that at Otaki, where large stumps must be removed before a plough can be used at all. Did the writers not know this? I will now refer to the official statistics for 1848 for the cultivation of wheat by the settlers of Wellington and Nelson respectively. It will be there seen that the former grew only 350 acres of wheat, while the latter grew 1,435 acres, the population of the former place being nearly double that of the latter, and the settlement two years older. What inference would they draw from this? That the people of Nelson were ten times as industrious as those of Wellington? Absurd as this may appear, if they are accurate in their reasoning they can arrive at no other conclusion. Why do the writers of this letter, who reside at Wellington, take no notice of the place in which they reside, and of which they might be presumed to know something, in order to institute a comparison between the Natives of Otaki and those of Motueka? How is it that they "knew of no other instance in which the juxtaposition of the two races by intermixture of lands and proximity of dwellings, in accordance with the plan originally devised by the New Zealand Company, has received any fair trial except in that locality," when the same trial has been made at Wellington, where the Natives are in closer and more immediate contact with the settlers, and where the selections of their lands has been more "in accordance with the plan originally devised by the New Zealand Company," these having been thoroughly intermixed with those of the settlers, than at Motueka, which is seventeen or eighteen miles from Nelson, and where their land was judiciously selected for them by a person not connected with the New Zealand Company, but an officer of the Government, in a continuous block, though they have some settlers in their neighbourhood? Are they really anxious to establish their own inferiority to the settlers of Nelson, or have they selected Motueka because the wooded nature of the land near Wellington has been the same impediment in the use of the plough as it has at Otaki, and therefore would not have suited their purpose of misrepresentation? On what principle of fairness can a comparison be instituted between agricultural progress in an open country and in a wooded district?

But in addition to what I have now stated, His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief will remember that there have been many reasons why the Natives of this part should not have advanced so rapidly as those of Motueka, even supposing their inferiority in this respect. While war around them, with which they had no immediate connection, disturbed the Natives here and discouraged them from extending their cultivations, the Natives on the other side of the Strait were living in security, and until the late road from Porirua to Wellington was made, the people of this place saw no prospect of conveying their wheat to Wellington with any certainty at a moderate cost; now they can take it to Porirua in canoes, and have it carted at a small cost to that place.

But there is an assumption in the endeavour to prove the superiority of the Natives of Motueka to those of Otaki which I can by no means allow to pass unnoticed: namely, that the cultivation of wheat is the chief or only test of progress in civilisation. It has already been shown that this would be no test as to the relative prosperity of Wellington and Nelson. Apply the same test to New South Wales, a woolgrowing colony, and would it be a fair criterion of its relative prosperity as a colony? This assumption is grounded on a saying of Sir Fowell Buxton's. I do not feel inclined to gainsay that dictum if interpreted as it doubtless was intended to be, that is: that habits of industry must accompany progress in Christianity. But to say literally that the "plough" must accompany it is an absurdity, and not what the author of the remark intended. This, however, is the way in which narrow-minded persons, unable to grasp a principle, ever mistake the sayings of great and wise men. It should be remembered, in considering this question, that agriculture is not the direct object of the