considered Tamehana one of the most able debaters and thinkers he had ever met. The kingmaker's appeal to the pakeha Administration read pathetically. With all the power, a well-balanced brain he contended for the right of the Maori to administer their own affairs within their own boundaries. "Have we not the right to this advanced price than the pakeha?" The always the land, was the theme of his earnest argument. "Since that it is unoccupied now, is no reason why it should not remain so. I hope the day will come when our descendants will not have more than they really require. As to a king, he should not every race have a king of its own? Is not the Queen (English), Nicholas (Russian), Bonaparte (French), Hirua (Tahitian), each for his own people? If all the countries united the aloofness of the Maori might be intelligible, but here are not."

"My friends," he wrote, "do you grudge us a king, as of old, a name greater than that of God? If it were so God forbade us, then we should give it up; but he forbade it, and while only our fellow-men are angry we will not relinquish it."

In another letter to the Government he defined the case for the appointment of a Maori king: "to put an end to feuds, to put down trouble, to hold the land of the slaves, and judge the offences of the chiefs." And this desire for a chief for the Maori was not inconsistent with loyalty to the accepted principle of British eminent domain. He had seen the evils of disunion among the tribes, the failure of the Government to stop bloodshed over land disputes. His aim was peaceful union and civilization for the Maori, under the benevolent control of Christianized chiefs. "Te Whakatoetoe Aroha, me te 'Uri" ("Religion, Love, and the Law") was the watchword of his political faith. But the altruistic kingmaker was in advance of his contemporaries in the colonizing Maori and pakeha. Had Sir George Grey been Governor in 1861, both the Waitara and the Waikato Wars would probably have been avoided. But the mischief was done by Governor Browne and his advisers, and when Grey returned to New Zealand in 1861, he found upon his hands the legacy of folly in war in Taranaki and an inevitable outbreak in Waikato. In the beginning the king movement might have been turned to blessing to the Maori people. Grey, indeed, did endeavour to meet the crisis by an offer of a semi-independent provincial government for the Maori people; but the antagonism of the more violent sections of Waikato and their co- clans had by then reached a stage at which compromise was impossible.

Chapter 17

THE WAITARA PURCHASE

A complicated history of the Waitara purchase may be reduced to a simple summary. Teira, a minor chief of the Ngatiwha, living with his fellow-tribesmen on the ancestral lands of the Waitara, was persuaded to offer 600 acres of the land to Government, at a price of £1 per acre. This block was on the left side of the Waitara, near the mouth, and included the ground on which the present Town of Waitara stands. A number of Teira's people supported him, but the majority of the Ngatiwha, headed by Wiremu Kingi te Rangitake, opposed the transaction, and made vehement and repeated protest. It was acknowledged that Teira was the occupier of a portion of the land, and the Government contention—on the advice of Mr. Parris, the local native agent—was that a native had a right to dispose of his individual interests in land. But this was long before the establishment of the Native Land Court. Titles in native land had not been individualized; it was practically impossible to determine the precise extent of Teira's interests. The case for the opponents of the sale was that while individual cultivation rights existed no one had a right to part with the tribal estate without general consent. The land was the common property of the people, and it was against accepted tribal policy to permit a wedge to be driven into the estate by deed of sale without the unequivocal consent of all concerned. While the whole tribe might be called upon to fight to maintain any or every member of the tribe in possession, so no member was justified in parting with the joint property of the clan. This land had always been thickly populated, and was the property of a great many families, and Wiremu Kingi, as the paramount chief, undoubtedly exercised his right in vetoing the sale. Moreover, it is known that Wiremu Kingi was the victim of a private feud. He and Teira had quarrelled, and Teira, in order to obtain revenge, deliberately proposed the sale in order to bring trouble upon his antagonist and the tribe. This was a common mode of action among the Maoris. The determined opposition of Wiremu Kingi—who was no fire-
THE WAIKATO WAR AND ITS CAUSES

Ka ngapu te whenua;
Ka haere nga tangata ki whea?
E Ruaimoko
Puritia!
Tawhia!
Kia tia!
A—o—o i ia!
Kia mau, kia mau!

The earthquake shakes the land;
Where shall man find an abiding-place?
O Ruaimoko
(God of the lower depths),
Hold fast our land!
Bind, tightly bind!
Be firm, be firm!
Nor let it from our grasp be torn!

—Kingite War-song.

This chant, often heard even at the present day, embodied the passionate sentiment of nationalism and home rule for the Maoris which developed into a war-fever in Waikato. From first to last the wise and patriotic Wiremu Tanehiana was a restraining force, and with him a few of the more temperate-minded of the Waikato chiefs, such as Patara te Tuhi, nephew of the old King Potatau Wherowho. Potatau was a firm friend of the pakeha, and, had he been a younger man, his undoubtedly great influence, born of his warrior reputation and his aristocratic position, probably would have prevented the Waikato throwing themselves into a war of arms with the Government. In the beginning of the King movement, as has already been explained, there was no desire to wage a war. The great meetings at which the selection of Potatau as King was confirmed were attended by numerous Europeans. Government officials, missionaries, and traders were alike welcome guests at Nguruawhia, Rangiaowhia, and the other centres of the home-rulers. The more intelligent of the Maoris saw clearly that
there was nothing to be gained by a rupture of relations with the pakeha. But the irritation caused by the inevitable friction of European encroachment, the treatment of the natives by the low class of whites, the reluctance of the authorities to grant the tribes a reasonable measure of self-government, and, lastly, the sympathy with Taranaki and the bitterness engendered by the loss of so many men in the Waikato, all went to make the Waikato and their kinsmen into a powerful foe of the Colonial Government.

In the beginning the natural desire of the natives for a better system of government could have been turned to beneficial account by a present Administration. At a large meeting at Paetai, near Rangiriri, on the 23rd April, 1857, Potatau, Te Wharepu, and other chiefs asked the Governor, Colonel Gore Browne, for the establishment of civil and criminal courts, the appointment of Magistrate and laws, and runanga or tribal councils. To this request the Government responded by the experimental establishment of civil institutions in the Waikato, under Mr. Fenton, afterwards Judge of the Native Land Court. The machinery, however, was not given time to develop into a useful and workable system before Mr. Fenton was recalled, and the field was left free for the exponents of Maori independence to develop their own schemes of government.

An account has been given in a previous chapter of the first meeting in connection with the establishment of the Maori kingdom. The Paetai meeting of 1857 was a highly picturesque gathering. The Lower Waikato people were assembled to meet their guests from up-river, the Ngati Haua and Ngati-Maniapoto and some of the Waikato hapu, who came sweeping down the river in a grand flotilla of nearly fifty canoes. Wiremu Tamihana and his Ngati-Haua set up on the marae or village camping place the flag of the newly selected King; this ensign was white, with a red border and two red crosses, symbolic of Christianity; it bore the words “Potatau King o Niu Tiren.” The speaches breathed intense patriotism. “I love New Zealand,” cried one old blanket-clad chief. “Let us have order, so that we may increase like the white man. Why should we disappear from the land? Let us have a king, for with a king there will be peace among us. New Zealand is ours—I love it.” Another, Hoani Papatia, of the Rangiowhia people, Ngati-Henua and Ngati-Apakuara, made an eloquent plea for independence and nationalism. “Fresh waters is lost when it mingles with the salt,” he said. “We have no lands and be independent of the pakeha.” And he began the chant which heads this chapter, “Ka ngapu te whenua.” “They who are two thousand natives gathered around took up the song and chanted it in a tremendous chorus. That old heart-cry of nationalism still holds power to electrify the Maori.

The formal investiture of Potatau with the dignity of King of Maori Kotahitanga, or confederation of tribes, took place in 1858 at Ngaruawahia, and was followed by a large gathering at Kingiaowha, the great granary and orchard of the Upper Waikato, far from Te Awamutu, where presently Mr. Gorst (afterwards Sir John Gorst) was placed by Sir George Grey as one of the gauges whereby to accomplish the downfall of the Maori flag. The aged King Potatau died in the winter of 1860, and his son Tawhiao, grotesquely baptised Matutaera (Methuselah), became the figurehead of the kingdom in his place.

Governor Browne and his Ministers consistently declined to recognize the Maori King or Maori nationality, but when Sir George Grey became Governor, and a peace Ministry was formed under Mr. Fox (afterwards Sir William Fox), efforts were made to conciliate Waikato. In 1861 the Governor sent John Gorst into the Waikato as Magistrate and Commissioner to watch the native political feeling and to establish European institutions in the heart of the Maori country. Grey and his Ministers introduced also a system of local government; under this plan the Maori country was to be divided into districts and “hundreds,” over each of which a Civil Commissioner was to be placed to grapple with the task of governing the natives in his zone of influence, with the assistance of salaried Maori Magistrates, assessors, and policemen. The new institutions meant a conflict in the Ngapuhi country and on the Lower Waikato, where the salaries and privileges were received with enthusiasm, but it was too late to entice the Kingites into the Government fold with such devices. The King’s runanga of chiefs at Ngaruawahia told Mr. Gorst that if some plan of the kind had been carried out five or six years previously there would have been a Maori King. Still they were willing, if the Governor would adopt the King and flag stand, to adopt his plans and work with him for the good of all. But the Kingitanga was the stumbling-block. Grey, for all his kindly feeling towards his native friends, would have nothing to do with an alien flag, and he declared at last, at a Waikato meeting, that although he would not fight against the Maori kingdom with the sword, he would “dig around it” until it fell. This ominous figure of speech, combined with the always suspicious presence of a Government agent in the heart of the King’s country, and, finally, the commencement of the military road from Drury through the forest to the Waikato River, fostered the Maori disbelief in the friendly intentions of the pakeha.

The Kingites’ suspicions of the Governor and his Ministers were aggravated by the attempt to establish a Government constabulary station at Te Kohohekohe. Grey’s plan was to police the Lower Waikato district by this post, which was close to Te Wheoro’s...
In 1860 Mr. C. O. Davis informed the Government that gun-powder was being made at Tautoro (near Kaikohe, in the Ngapuhi country), and in the Waikato territory. It was believed that a Maori who had been in Sydney had learned the manufacture of powder there, and that Europeans assisted in the work. It is known that later on in the wars a European (Moffat) made a coarse gunpowder at a settlement near Taumarumaru, on the Upper Waikato river. But it is improbable that the Maoris relied on locally made gunpowder to any great extent; they had sources of supply from traders, and for several years before the Waikato War had been laying in stocks of powder, lead, and percussion caps. Large quantities of ammunition were traded to the natives at Tauranga up to the beginning of the war. Tauranga was, in fact, one of the avenues of supply for Ngati-Haua as well as the Ngai-te-Rangi and other coast tribes. A common trick to evade the authorities when the restrictions on the sale of munitions were in force was for a coasting-vessel to clear outward at the Auckland Customs for Tauranga or other ports with a cargo ostensibly of empty casks (for pork) and bags of salt; each cask as often as not contained several kegs of gunpowder, and the bags were filled with lead and boxes of percussion caps. American whalers calling in at East Coast ports were believed to have bartered ammunition to the Maoris in return for provisions, and Sydney trading-vessels surreptitiously supplied munitions, but most of the guns and powder reached the Maoris from Auckland trading-houses.

The war now waged was very different from Hone Heke's chivalrous tournament of 1845. It was a racial war; the Maori aim was to sweep the pakeha to the sea, as the pakeha Government's object was to teach the Maori his subjection to British authority. The Europeans were not without warning that the sharp and barbarous old Maori methods of warfare were to be revived. Wiremu Tamehana himself, deeply as he sorrowed over the inevitable conflict, was compelled to place himself in line with his countrymen. He warned Archdeacon Brown, at Tauranga, that he—meaning his race—would spare neither unarmed persons (tangata ringa-kore) nor property. In August, 1863, he wrote to the Governor cautioning him to bring "to the towns, the defenceless, lest they be killed in their farms in the bush." "But," he concluded, "you are well acquainted with the customs of the Maori race." The frontier settlers who remained on their sections did so at their own risk. No chief, not even the King or the kingmaker, could restrain a party of young bloods on the war-path seeking to flesh their tomahawks. They would quote the ancient war-proverb, "He maroro kokoti iku waka" ("A flying-fish crossing the bow of the canoe") in allusion to any luckless persons whom a fighting teaua might find in its path, and in the stern logic of the
he confessed an 'utter contempt' for the treaty. Newer settlers sometimes revealed a greater degree of impatience. James Crowe Richmond, in Taranaki, anticipated the time when the treaty would be overruled and Maori claims to the extensive bush-lands would no longer be able to 'damp the ardour and cramp the energies of the industrious white man'. Such opinions were often generated by irritation over land transactions, but as long as land purchase matched settler demand, the treaty was not generally seen as unduly obstructive to colonisation. If Maori owners refused to sell, of course, it would be a different matter.

A new dimension developed as the colony moved towards self-government. It had been apparent for some years that practical application of the treaty would have to be worked out in New Zealand. The 1852 constitution transferred the struggle for definition of the treaty from the desk of the Colonial Office to the floor of the colonial parliament.

The new constitution was not accompanied by any instructions on land such as had, in 1846, suggested a restrictive interpretation of the treaty's land guarantee. Indeed, the 1852 measure implicitly recognised the land guarantee by endorsing the Crown's right of pre-emption. The constitution also seemed to recognise some of the egalitarian principles behind the 1840 document, by allowing Maori a place in future government of the colony. The Secretary of State for Colonies gave an assurance that the 'whole spirit' of the measure was to put Maori on the same footing as settlers 'as completely as possible'. Theoretically, no distinction was drawn between the two races with regard to the franchise. The qualification was to be male, over the age of twenty-one, having possession of either a freehold estate with an annual value of £50, or a leasehold estate of the annual value of £10, or the occupation of a dwelling of the annual value of £10 in a town or £5 in the country. It was intended to be virtually a male suffrage.

Certain precautions were nevertheless built into the constitution. An annual sum of £7,000 was to be set aside for native purposes, in recognition of the inevitable exclusion from representation of some Maori at a time when Maori were substantial contributors to the colonial revenue; provision was made to define, if necessary, native districts where Maori laws, customs and usages were repugnant to the general principles of humanity; and finally, any enactment of the central legislature which related specifically to Maori had to be reserved for Crown assent. These provisions were seen as a temporary acknowledge-
Sewell observed, Johnson was 'imperfectly acquainted' with the case; the government published his opinions nevertheless.75

Through the latter half of 1860 and well into 1861, new writings less clear than those of Martin and Johnson further confused the issues. C.O. Torlesse recommended isolating the Maori until they agreed to a new treaty; Fox blamed the governor for the mess over Waitara and advocated full settler responsibility for Maori affairs.76 Busby, bursting into the limelight again in a press debate on the treaty, published his own reply to Martin.77 The ex-Resident, for some twenty years a self-appointed but increasingly inconsistent authority on the treaty, presented an emotional argument, asserting that there was 'no evidence of New Zealanders ever having any rights with the exception of those which were created by the Treaty of Waitangi'.78 Had Busby intended his statement to mean that the treaty conferred legal rights under the Crown on the Maori people, then his argument might have carried some respect, but his reasoning was unclear. George Clarke, former Chief Protector of Aborigines, felt compelled to print a defence of Martin in which he pointed out Busby's errors and reiterated that Maori rights, as they existed in 1840, had been confirmed by treaty and not conferred as Busby implied.79

It is difficult to determine the extent to which this discussion, with all its confusion and contradiction, affected Maori. Settlers were uneasy aware that at least some of it reached Maori ears. To counteract its effect, the government's Maori Messenger had been mounting its own campaign for some time. The King movement had come under special attention; the newspaper admonished its readers to uphold the Queen's mana, which the treaty had given them, and which left no room for allegiance to the King. It was repeatedly stressed that only under the Queen's mana could Maori and Pakeha be one people. The paper published an open letter from Busby to the Maori people, which outlined the treaty's protective features and repeated the idea that the shadow of the land alone had gone to the Queen, the substance remaining to the chiefs. Busby reinforced the notion of the treaty as the spiritual 'covenant' between the Queen and the Maori people making them one. 'Take heed,' he warned Maori readers, 'that ye are not rebelling against God as well as against the Queen.'80

The important question of mana was taken up by the Maori Messenger against a background of growing public debate on the use of the term.81 The paper reported on a King movement meeting near Auckland early in 1860 where speakers had discussed mana at length. It was not a new idea – the fear that Maori mana over the land was passing to the settlers had been voiced intermittently by Maori throughout the 1850s82 but a section of the movement now advocated asserting a Maori independence (te tikanga whakamotuhake i nga iwi Maori). The Maori Messenger voiced the opinion that the mana of New Zealand had gone to the Queen already, but disingenuously asked: 'What is this mana? Is it anything more than the right to protect?' Maori and Pakeha were one people so one race could not say that the country was for them alone; it was for both races. 'Ekore e peene, No matou a Niu Tiran, engari, No tatou a Niu Tiran.'83 Like Martin's work, this journalism also evaded the issue of sovereignty.

In the first half of 1861, the colony appeared to be drifting towards a showdown on the question of sovereignty. Browne had become more resolute in his condemnation of the King movement when some Waikato became involved in the Taranaki fighting. Following an uneasy truce in Taranaki in April 1861, the focus shifted to Waikato where Tawhiao had become King following Potatau Te Wherohero's death in June 1860. In late May 1861, the governor sent a proclamation to the Waikato people accusing them of violating the treaty and requiring from all 'submission without reserve, to the Queen's sovereignty and the authority of the law'. Land 'combinations' were outlawed and plunder taken in Taranaki had to be restored. As Browne's critics said, this was tantamount to saying: 'Accept the Treaty of Waitangi or I will make you.'84

From the Maori point of view, Browne's proclamation justified long-held fears that Pakeha were not to be trusted: two months before, in the Maori Messenger, Browne had actually denied two rumours – that he was bent on depriving Maori of their land and that he was determined to destroy chiefly influence. At the same time, he had recited the second article of the treaty including the guarantee of fisheries, adding with considerable solemnity: 'I repeat this assurance to you [Maori] again now, and I call upon all true and faithful Maori to contradict any report, coming either from European or Native, which throws doubt on this pledge.'85 Even the May proclamation had noted this second article, in contradiction to the insistence on Kingite submission. In the face of Browne's inconsistencies, Wiremu Tamihana Tarapipi wrote a thoughtful reply reiterating the understanding of the treaty that the moderate wing of the King movement had held from the beginning: that there was a place for an independent Maori body in conjunction with the Queen's sovereignty or mana.86

Whether a degree of Maori independence should be tolerated
was now the crucial question upon which the governor, the press and the General Assembly concentrated in mid-1861, but without reaching a consensus. The governor and some ministers privately favoured carrying the war into the Waikato, and the possibility of a more representative Kohimarama conference was also talked about in government circles, but a turn of events saved Browne and the ministry from either course.

In July 1861 the Stafford Ministry fell and Fox formed a new government. Within weeks, news arrived of George Grey's appointment as governor for a second term, a decision which the Colonial Office had felt obliged to make in the face of growing doubts about Browne's suitability. Browne postponed calling another Kohimarama conference, and when Grey arrived the proposal was dropped altogether. The new governor thought it would not be 'wise to call a number of semi-barbarian Natives together to frame a Constitution for themselves'. Grey probably reasoned that to give official recognition to a corporate Maori body while relations with the King movement had not been settled was tantamount to an official acceptance of Maori separateness. The government now turned to other alternatives to settle the matter of mana or sovereignty.

Chapter Eight

A WAR OF SOVEREIGNTY

'All questions between the British colonists of New Zealand and the Maoris are now merged in a war of sovereignty – probably of extermination.'

This report in The Times of 16 December 1864 was a belated recognition of a state of affairs that had existed from at least 1861. That the question of sovereignty was the critical point of difference between the races had been widely acknowledged in New Zealand. As Frederick Weld, Native Minister in the Stafford Ministry, put it, the government was determined to assert British sovereignty, whereas it was clear that Wiremu Tamihana 'meant most distinctly a Maori nationality'. To Weld, this would spell ruin because the King movement 'combination' would block the expansion of law and order, a result that would ruin Maori progress too. Many members of the Assembly shared Weld's view. Like Weld, they were convinced that history showed the need to impose supremacy over native races by force. The 'inevitable hour of conflict must come,' warned C.W. Richmond; 'it was one of the necessities of colonization.'

The government, nevertheless, needed to justify any attack upon the King movement, and Assembly members thought that they had found a cause in Tamihana's correspondence with the government. The chief's assertion of a Maori independence, deriving from the treaty's guarantee of chieftainship, enabled members to argue that Waikato would not submit to British sovereignty. It was an easy step to suggest that the King movement's very existence constituted treason.

Among the public at large, the general impression by the early 1860s was that the country was heading for a 'war of races'. Differences of opinion lay only in how and when the war might begin. Sewell feared that the tone of public vindictiveness was sufficiently strong in 1861 for a war of extermination to break out that year. Yet settlers were not unanimous in their support for war; some still hoped that it could be avoided. Lady Martin assured an English friend that 'independent quiet men who had been in the country for many years were to a man opposed' to the idea.

In early 1861, however, 'moderates' like Sewell, 'sick and indig- nant' at the belligerent tone of the governor and the Assembly, were a minority voice. In spite of the uneasy truce that brought
was elected in June 1858, and was succeeded by his son, Tawhiao, in July 1860. The origins and character of the King Movement are still the subjects of a debate to which no direct contribution can be made here. But the military assessment of the organization, attempted in a later chapter, indicates that its power, social efficiency, and breadth of support have been underestimated. The Movement embraced several shades of Maori opinion. The contemporary misnomers ‘moderates’ and ‘extremists’ have stuck to the two major parties, represented by Wiremu Tamahana (‘The Kingmaker’) and Rewi Maniapoto respectively. But all the Kingites were united in their opposition to the sale of land.

Strong opposition to the land-selling also existed outside the King Movement. In Taranaki, feuding broke out between the land-selling minority of the local Atiawa tribe, led by Ihaia, and the anti-land-selling majority, led by Wiremu Kingi, a chief who had supported the government against Te Rangihāeata when living near Wellington. In 1859, a third chief, Teira, offered to sell the British 600 acres at Waitara, and Kingi, who was generally recognized as the senior Atiawa tribal chief, vetoed the sale. Teira’s offer, however, was accepted by Governor Thomas Gore Browne, who had succeeded Grey in 1855. Browne was aware that Kingi might resist, but he nevertheless felt compelled to proceed with the ‘purchase’ and occupation of Waitara. War consequently broke out on 17 March 1860, and lasted for one year. Te Atiawa fought unaided for a little more than a week. After this, Kingi was supported by the Ngati Ruanui and Taranaki tribes, and within a month operations were dominated by the prospect and reality of Kingite intervention.

The British were unable to achieve a military decision in Taranaki and, largely for this reason, they turned their attention to the root of the problem: Kingite military power and independence. Both Browne and Grey, who returned for his second term as Governor in September 1861, decided to invade Waikato to suppress the King Movement by force. Browne was recalled before he could implement his decision, but—after an interim period which will be examined elsewhere—Grey launched the invasion in July 1863. The subsequent operations included a little fighting in Taranaki, but were primarily confined to the Auckland Province, and the whole conflict of 1863–4 may be termed the Waikato War.

I THE CAUSES OF WAR IN TARANAKI AND WAIKATO

THE CAUSES OF THESE WARS, IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO THEIR course, have generated more literature than any other issue in New Zealand history. Some consensus has been achieved in rejecting the old ‘official’ explanation that the wars resulted from Maori aggression, and this study strongly supports this conclusion. However, a convincing and comprehensive explanation for the collapse from economic co-operation to war in both Taranaki and Waikato has yet to be advanced. A substantial effort to help fill this gap would require a book in itself, but the question of causes is to some extent bound up with an appreciation of the military operations, and a very brief and limited treatment must be attempted.

It is useful to begin with one general observation. Many great historical debates concern the causes of war, and something applicable to the New Zealand case can be learned from them. The controversy over the origins of the English Civil War, for example, has indicated that mono-causal models must be treated with caution; that, on the other hand, an unweighted list of causal factors is not an explanation; and that the means available to participants must be assessed along with their motives. This debate also suggests that historians face a standing temptation to use the concept of inevitability much as medieval cartographers used the term terrae incognitae.

Tendencies of this kind can be detected in the theory that settler pressure for land inevitably brought about the Taranaki and Waikato Wars. In the definitive modern exposition of this theory, Keith Sinclair, while placing his emphasis on the land issue, gives some weight to other factors. But other writers are less cautious, and the idea that the seizure of Maori land was the main British political and military objective has been so widely adopted that the conflicts are often called ‘The Land Wars’. It is true that many North Island settlers were eager to acquire Maori land, though this did not necessarily reflect real needs. But, while the settlers had had responsible government since 1856, they had little in the way of military or financial resources, and the wars were actually undertaken primarily by Imperial troops. The settlers may have had the motives, but they did not have the means.

The decisions to use Imperial troops were taken by Governors Browne and Grey, with the support or acquiescence of the Imperial Government. It is sometimes suggested that Browne was a puppet in the hands of certain colonists, but B. J. Dalton has shown that Browne made his own decision for war. This is certainly true of Grey. Moreover, a wide range of groups and individuals with no interest in Maori land supported the wars. These included the South Island settlers, a large section of the English and Australian press, and, in the case of the Waikato War, such clergymen as Bishops Selwyn and William Williams. Selwyn and Williams make particularly unconvincing land-grabbers. Motives with a much wider appeal for the British than land-hunger must therefore be sought.

In an essay published in 1967, Alan Ward offered a whole host of alternative motives. His essay was less an explanation for the outbreak of war than an unweighted list of causal factors, and these applied mainly to Waikato rather than Taranaki. But he did provide an effective critique of the mono-causal ‘Land Wars’ theory, and the examples he cites as evidence for several of his causal factors could be multiplied from the research undertaken for this book. In particular, the widespread desire for the imposition of British administration, law, and civilization on the Maoris was so important that it should rank with land-hunger as a cause of war.

But perhaps these factors are themselves only part of a greater whole. The
wars can be seen as a series of British attempts to impose substantive, not against nominal, sovereignty on the Maoris. Ward touches on this, observing that the New Zealand governors were ‘beset by a fatal tendency to believe that the Queen’s government must be demonstrably exercised over all those who, since the Treaty of Waitangi, had been regarded as British subjects.’ But perhaps most British, not just the governors, were beset by this ‘fatal tendency’, and perhaps this is not simply one of a dozen equal factors, but an over-arching cause, a way of understanding the origins of the New Zealand Wars as a whole. Substantive sovereignty would allow the relatively easy purchase of Maori land, and the imposition of British administration, law, and civilization on the Maoris. But the British desire for substantive sovereignty was also influenced by less tangible factors: the complicated body of beliefs and attitudes which led them to expect to rule their new colony in practice as well as theory, and to resent the fact that they did not.

Between 1848 and 1860, the British population increased through immigration and high birth-rates, and the Maori population decreased through disease and low birth-rates, until the former considerably outnumbered the latter in the country as a whole, though not in the North Island. For the first half of the period, the British settlements expanded and government influence increased. Some Maori chiefs accepted government assistance, advice, and mediation of disputes. But these considerations should not be allowed to obscure the element of continuity between British-Maori relations before and after 1848. British sovereignty over Maori districts remained ‘more nominal than real’. ‘English law has always prevailed in the English settlements,’ wrote Governor Browne, in 1860, ‘but remains a dead letter beyond them.’

The boundaries between Maori and British spheres of control were generally defined by the area of land ‘sold’ by the former to the latter. ‘Sale’ is rather a deceptive term for the most common type of alienation. By the 1860s, both races tacitly recognized that the sale of large blocks of land contiguous to British settlements involved the transfer of political and magisterial control as well as of property rights. This process had more in common with the Louisiana Purchase than the sale of a farm in England. Thus the expansion of the area of real British control was intrinsically interwoven with the purchase of Maori land. Conversely, to oppose land sales was to oppose the extension of British sovereignty and to defend Maori autonomy.

In one respect, the emergence of the King Movement did not constitute a radical change in the North Island situation. It was not a declaration of Maori independence—this already existed—and it added no new territory to the Maori sphere. It sought merely to unite pre-existing independent polities. But in other ways the Movement was an important change. Together with the rise in anti-land-selling feeling generally, it raised the profile of Maori independence from a level which the British disliked but tolerated, to a level which many found entirely unacceptable.
Belich 1986  THE NEW ZEALAND WARS

' the present is a land quarrel', wherein Kingi, a loyal British subject, justifiably resisted Browne's abuse of power.11

Historians have tended to follow the 'philo-Maori' tradition, itself a legacy of the myth that the Treaty of Waitangi made New Zealand British instantly, by the wave of a wand. But we can accept the colonists' assertion that they were fighting for substantive sovereignty—to make the Maori in reality what by a legal fiction they have long been in name, British subjects62—with accepting its premise: that this was a just, legitimate, and necessary act. For one thing, it can be argued that the real Treaty of Waitangi was the Maori version, and that under its provisions the Maoris retained local autonomy of the kind Kingi was exercising at Waitara. More importantly, whatever the Treaty said or did not say, the British had tacitly accepted the practical independence of Maori districts for twenty years. In effect, Wiremu Kingi was a British ally, not a subject. Perhaps the Taranaki and Waikato conflicts were more akin to classic wars of conquest than we would like to believe.

So brief an argument must remain tentative, but we can be more confident about the following conclusion. The analysis of the operations in the Taranaki and Waikato Wars will show that land was not the main British military objective. The British consistently attempted to obtain victory through decisive battle. When they failed to do so, they were sorely disappointed. In Waikato, the occupation of tracts of land was sometimes a side-effect of those attempts, but for most observers this was nothing more than a consolation prize. Of course, to seek to defeat the previous occupants does not necessarily preclude a political aim of seizing land. But the single-minded search for rapid and decisive victory accords much better with a political aim of asserting sovereignty. When the British did occupy the land supposed to be their main objective at Waitara and in central Waikato, they were not content and continued to seek to crush the Maoris in battle. In Taranaki, Browne at first hoped that a sharp local lesson would be enough to demonstrate to the Maoris that British authority was to be taken seriously, even beyond the tacitly agreed boundaries of control; that British sovereignty was to some degree substantive as well as nominal. When this effort failed, as a result of Kingite intervention, the British method became more comprehensive, though their objective remained essentially the same. In this respect, a main cause of the Waikato War was the failure of the British attempt to assert their sovereignty over the Maoris through victory in Taranaki.

In sum, it is suggested that the British sought first to check, and then to cripple, Maori independence. This was reflected in persistent efforts to defeat Maori forces in decisive battle. This view has significant implications for an understanding of the nature and results of the military operations.

II THE SEARCH FOR QUICK VICTORY

WAVERE ITS POLITICAL CONNECTIONS WITH ITS predecessor in the North and its successor in Waikato, the Taranaki War of March 1860 to March 1861 was militarily a separate conflict. It was fought in a different area, and there were certain differences in the strategic context. In contrast to the Northern War, the British had the advantage of interior lines and of relatively easy access to the seat of operations. The theatre of war extended north and south of the main British base at New Plymouth, and the troops were rarely called upon to march more than twenty miles from this base. Contemporary writers made a great deal of the unfavourable terrain in this area, and it is true that the interior of Taranaki province consisted principally of dense forest. But operations were restricted to the coastal strip. Part of this was Maori and European farmland, and the rest was rough but penetrable, even by convoys of carts. In contrast to the Waikato War, the main combatants on the Maori side did not have to protect their economic heartland. The Waikato Kingites fought outside their own territory, travelling to and from Taranaki when they chose. They therefore had substantially more freedom of action than in 1863–4. Despite these differences, the Taranaki War had important features in common with the other conflicts, and the two main themes of this study are equally applicable to it.

British commentators again turned to such mechanisms as the exaggeration of Maori numbers and casualties to explain or to palliate failure. Civilians specialized in emphasizing faulty military leadership. In their own defence, soldiers such as Colonel Robert Carey stressed the elusiveness of the Maoris in the 'almost impenetrable' Taranaki terrain. This, and the general reluctance to credit the Maoris with the possession of certain kinds of military talent, led writers like Carey to believe that accidents of the ground, and such things as the ability 'to burrow like rabbits through the high fern', were the essence of any Maori success. Carey wrote emphatically that 'no strategical knowledge was shown by the Maori in his plans'.13 Most modern historians have tended to rely on a mix of these contemporary opinions. They agree with the settlers that one commander, Colonel Gold, was incompetent and unsuccessful. 'The incapacity of the original commander, Colonel Gold, was rightly said to be a military phenomenon in itself.' They agree with the soldiers that another commander, General Pratt, was both competent and successful. Pratt 'found the means' to beat the Maoris by 'taking pa with sweat not blood'. Most historians accept that the Maoris had all the accidental advantages but failed to use them properly. 'It cannot be said that they exploited their advantages to the full.' The Maoris 'adopted no comprehensive or co-ordinated strategy'. One aim of the following analysis is to plot the emergence of these beliefs, and to assess their validity.14

The British reverted again and again throughout the war to their overriding military objective—rapid and decisive victory through the destruc-
with most similar movements there was a conservative, even backward-looking strain in Maori nationalism. There was a revival of declining customs such as tattooing – Wiremu Tamihana said he had searched the scriptures and found nothing against it. Some of the nationalists tried to induce their people to cease trading with the settlers and to abandon European agricultural techniques. The extreme Kingites were imitating European organization in the hope that it would enable them to bring European political and cultural dominance to an end. A favourite Kingite song expresses with great force this rejection of Europe and antagonism to Europeans:

Let the mad drunkards set off to Europe, to the diggings, the sugar, flour, biscuit, tea consumers. That is all. New Zealand still possesses great power. The King shall encircle the whole island.

The ‘diggings’ referred to were the gold-fields of Australia, or perhaps Otago. Some Maoris even hoped to drive the Europeans into the sea.

Fortunately for the Europeans, many tribes did not share such aspirations; even within the King movement there was deep division between the moderates led by Wiremu Tamihana, and the anti-European extremists who followed Rewi, chief of the Ngati Maniapoto tribe. Traditional tribal rivalries, which had not been altogether reconciled by the doctrine of unity, were another source of division. The King reigned, but he did not rule his subjects, who included most of the Waikato and Taupo Maoris, some from Hawke’s Bay and the eastern coastal region, and, within a year or two, the tribes of southern Taranaki. In practice his kingdom was merely a loose federation of tribes, yet it represented a formidable opposition to the purposes of the settlers, for it was united by the resolution to sell no more land. The land of the Kingite chiefs was placed under the mana of the King; it was made tapu. Many Maoris who declined to do fealty to the King, such as Wiremu Kingi of Waitara, were at one with the King party on this issue. In Taranaki and on the East Coast there were sporadic Maori feuds, during the fifties, between the ‘land sellers’ and the ‘land holders’; but it seems probable that the great majority of Maoris, south of Auckland, sympathized with the latter party.

Settlement was the cause of Maori nationalism and provided it with an objective, to keep the land. The peace of God and British law and order made nationalism possible by making it safe for the Maoris to travel throughout the country. And there was an even more fundamental sense, paradoxical as it may sound, in which the Europeans created the Maori nation. Before the arrival of strangers from overseas among the warring tribes, the inhabitants of New Zealand were Atiawa or Ngapuhi or Waikato. So far as is known, they had no name for their race: the word maori meant ‘normal’. They applied the term to themselves only when, for the first time in their recollection, they encountered another race.

The newcomers were of a different colour. From the highest to the lowest these white men (pakeha) assumed their superiority to the Maori. The enlightened and evangelical saw their superiority merely as one of civilization; but most of the settlers were unenlightened, never having felt the gentle touch of humanitarianism. In their European cultural baggage they brought a very different attitude towards the Maoris. They called these brown folk, whom they regarded as dirty, degraded, lazy, and immoral, ‘blacks’ or ‘niggers’. They despised them; but in many parts of the country they also feared and hated them. There is no need, in an age which has seen so much of racialism, to labour the point, but it is useful to recall the observation of J. E. Gorst, that men who are ‘habitually told that they emit a disagreeable smell, are not likely to feel a very strong affection towards the race that smells them’. On the Maori side, resentment and feelings of inferiority both fed the emotional springs of aggressive racialism. The European, as the Maoris saw him, was as unpleasant a figure as the settlers’ stereotype Maori. He was greedy, arrogant, lacking in courtesy, selfish – in a word, ‘individualistic’. He treated Maori women as prostitutes and, being without natural decency, deserted his half-caste children. He was, moreover, not half the warrior that the Maori was: had not he been beaten by Hone Heke and Te Rauparaha?

Some of the most intelligent of contemporary observers, both politicians and missionaries, interpreted the King movement not as a reaction against European influence, but as a
consequence of the weakness of European political influence in Maori districts. The tribal system was falling into decline, they observed, but the Government was doing little to replace it with European political institutions. The King movement, in this view, was the creation of a people searching for law and order amidst the chaotic remnants of tribalism.

This explanation had much to recommend it. It saw the King movement, not as a 'childish game', as Governor Gore Browne called it, nor as a conspiracy, but as a brave attempt to meet the challenge of a changing world. There is no doubt that to some Kingite leaders, like Wiremu Tamihana, the aim was to introduce some effective system of law and order. He complained that the Government had made no attempt to stop the 'river of blood' which flowed from Maori land-feuds. Nevertheless, this explanation reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of nationalism, which is never as rational as many Victorian gentlemen supposed. Good government has nowhere proved a cure for nationalism. Judging by experience elsewhere, it seems probable that the effective government of Maori districts, since it would have meant more interference with Maori society, would have intensified the nationalist reaction. In the nineteen-twenties, by trying to incorporate the village institutions in its machinery of control, the New Zealand Government was in touch off a revolt in Samoa.

If such a view of Maori nationalism is accepted, it necessarily calls in question the whole basis of government native policy in New Zealand. Grey's policy had been to smooth over existing difficulties, while aiming at bringing racial friction to an end through the Europeanization of the Maoris. That the Maoris would eventually become brown Europeans had also been implicit in land policy, for, on this assumption, they would eventually need less land. Consequently, providing that purchases were fair and that adequate reserves were made, no harm was done if the settlers acquired a large proportion of the land.

Some degree of Europeanization was, of course, inevitable; but missionaries, politicians and governors alike tended to assume that the faster the application of Grey's Europeanizing policy, the better it would be for both races. They assumed, in other words, that the way to cure the 'Maori problem' was to administer larger and more frequent doses of what was causing it - European influence.

In a matter so speculative it is not possible to reach a firm conclusion, but it seems reasonable to suggest that, at that stage of inter-racial relations, exactly the opposite policy would have been better; that what was needed was to minimize the pressure of European society on the Maoris, a result which might have been achieved by some degree of segregation. The possibility of introducing such a policy had been envisaged in the 1856 constitution and in that of 1852, both of which made provision for the declaration of native districts within which the Maoris could live in accordance with their own laws and customs; but it had been ignored. To have adopted a policy of partial segregation would have meant a reversal of current ideas about the possible speed of amalgamation. Moreover, it would have been difficult to apply, for any Maori districts which might be set up were bound to include lands, such as the banks of the Waikato and Waikato rivers, which the settlers particularly coveted. A modification of this policy was tried, half-heartedly, in 1858; and in 1864, too late.

Apart from land purchase policy, the Government's native policy, which was restricted by a shortage of money and of qualified agents, did not cause Maori nationalism. The Government failed, indeed, to exert any appreciable influence on the rate or direction of change in the Maori community. It still seemed not impossible, however, that the authorities could establish friendly relations with the King movement, or even guide it. But, owing to the extraordinary disorganization in the administration of Maori affairs under Governor Gore Browne, no attempt was made to do either.

Colonel Thomas Gore Browne was a pleasant, well-meaning gentleman, straightforward, sincere and, in contrast to his predecessor, morally quite scrupulous. He had retired from the Indian army, and had come to New Zealand in 1855, after serving as Governor of St Helena, where, the Dictionary of National Biography tells us, he improved the water supply. He would have made an admirable, indeed a typical, governor
Waikato, who became bold and careless, suffered very heavy casualties.

In April 1861, after a year's inconclusive manoeuvring and a few pitched battles, a truce was called. Some of the rebels made their peace, but Kingi retreated to the Waikato. No one believed the war was over. In Taranaki both Maori and European farming had almost ceased. Troops occupied the Waitara; rebels held European land south of New Plymouth. But the centre of attention had shifted to the Waikato. Potatau had died in 1860; his successor, King Tawhiao, was winning the allegiance of increasing numbers all over the island as the Maoris became convinced that the settlers meant to take their land by force. The more extremely nationalistic Kingites such as Rewi, the chief of the Ngatimaniapoto tribe, were advocating an attack on Auckland itself.

The crucial issue was whether the Kingites, as a body, would go on the war-path, and this largely depended on what attitude the Government took towards the Maori monarch, now that some of his subjects had interfered in Taranaki. To the Governor, the idea of giving any recognition to the Maori King was intolerable. He condemned the King movement as an 'unlawful combination', demanded submission to the Queen, and the return of plunder taken in Taranaki. When the Kingites refused to accept these terms, he decided, in mid-1861, to invade the Waikato and depose the King. Both the New Zealand General Assembly and the Colonial Office drew back before this prospect.

Though there had been a vocal minority of dissentients such as the Chief Justice, Sir William Martin, and Archdeacon Octavius Hadfield, as well as a few politicians, including William Fox the leader of the 'provincialist' Opposition, the majority of the settlers were in 1860 enthusiastic about the war. The Government was in a shaky position - it was defeated in most divisions on issues affecting the powers of the Province; but it was saved by the war. Several South Island 'Provincialists' supported its native and war policy and ensured a majority sufficient to keep it in office. These members, whose constituents were far from the battle and rarely saw a Maori, were among the most aggressive. Their ardent concern to defend British honour against the traitorous rebels was too little tempered by any sense of the difficulties and dangers faced by the northern settlers. Most of the so-called 'peace party', on the other hand, were northerners.

In 1861, with the prospect of an extended war before them, the majority of Members of the House of Representatives were by no means convinced that the Governor's past policies or present intentions were wrong; but they were vividly conscious of the danger that, if the Kingites were attacked, they might fall on any of the northern settlements. The House decided that there were not enough troops to defend the settlements and opposed Gore Browne's plan to take the offensive.

At the same time the British authorities, who were beginning to think that the Governor had made a mistake at Waitara, were also becoming alarmed by his bellicose attitude towards the Maori King. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Newcastle, thought it absurd to go to war over a name. He could see no reason why the Maoris should not honour their King, 'whether his name be Potato or Brian Boru', provided they committed no breach of the peace. He decided to save the Governor from further error. Sir George Grey had written from Cape Town offering his services as a Commissioner to mediate in New Zealand. Perhaps Grey's great talents and prestige would enable him once again to establish a peaceful co-existence in New Zealand. He was sent back for a second term as Governor. Before he arrived McLean resigned the native secretaryship and the Stafford ministry lost office.

Though the political stage seemed set for a new drama, the action soon revealed not another play but merely a second act with a fresh cast. The chorus of grief stemming from the recent war sounded louder than Grey's tidings of peace; the Waitara purchase remained, an ominous backdrop.

Grey and the new Premier, William Fox, set about introducing in Maori districts a system of 'indirect rule' such as the Stafford ministry had advocated in 1858. Maori runanga (assemblies) in the various districts were to recommend to the Governor the laws they required. He could introduce them by Order-in-Council without seeking parliamentary assent. European doctors, magistrates and civil commissioners were to