

To what extent could it be argued that Governor FitzRoy (1843-1845) and Governor Grey (1845-1853) made a serious impact on the major problems of New Zealand?

Selwyn Riley

Almost without exception historians have recognised the impact made by Sir George Grey on the major problems of New Zealand during his first term of governorship. Less often has Robert FitzRoy been acknowledged as having a significant effect on those problems. This essay will argue that in proportion to his length of term in office, and constrained to follow a parsimonious and short sighted policy, FitzRoy nevertheless exerted a significant influence.

The problems to be faced were the need eventually to bring Maori under the control of the governor to protect the settlements, and provide the colonists with land for their needs, whilst at the same time honouring the Crown's obligation to the Maori under the Treaty of Waitangi. Unlike Grey, FitzRoy had to cope with an insolvent administration and a grossly inadequate military resource.

British policy for New Zealand in 1843 as had been the case in 1840 was to incur 'no unnecessary expense'.¹ As Ian Wards put it 'there was no long or medium term plan, merely one of "wait and see"'.¹ With official salaries nearly a year in arrears, no naval vessel on station and equipped with only one company of soldiers, FitzRoy was faced with Maori unrest, Company settlers greedy for land but fearful of their Maori neighbours, and an economy in which revenue fell far below expenditure. Yet his instructions obliged him to govern by 'moral suasion',² without further help from Britain.

Six months before FitzRoy arrived in New Zealand there had occurred at Wairau the affray in which several Europeans lost their lives at the hands of Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata. A posse of settlers led by a police magistrate attempted the arrest of the two chiefs on what was later found to be a trumped-up charge. The British were out manoeuvred, and several who surrendered were killed by Te Rangihaeata as utu³ for his wife Rongo, who died from a British bullet. FitzRoy's finding of fault on the part of the posse, and his recognition of the Maori custom of utu enraged the colonists, but earned the governor the trust

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ballara, Angela 'The Pursuit of Mana? A Re-evaluation of the Process of Land Alienation by Maoris 1840-1860', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 91, 4, 1982, pp. 519-41.
- Bassett, Judith 'Impotent Autocrats 1840-1860' in Judith Binney, Judith Bassett, and Erik Olssen, *The People and the Land - Te Tangata me Te Whenua: An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, Wellington, 1993, pp. 57-75.
- Belich, James *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland, 1986.
- Billing, Graham 'The Wairau Affray', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 449-54.
- Binney, Judith 'Kawanatanga and Rangatiratanga 1840-1860' in Judith Binney, Judith Bassett and Erik Olssen, *The People and the Land - Te Tangata me Te Whenua: An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, Wellington, 1993, pp. 77-97.
- Burns, Patricia *Te Rauparaha - A New Perspective*, Wellington, 1980.
- Cairns, Keith, R 'War Parties in the Hutt', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 495-99.
- Dalziel, Raewyn 'The Politics of Settlement' in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 87-111.
- Gardner, W.J. 'A Colonial Economy' in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 57-88.
- Grover, Ray 'Te Rangihaeata: Maori Patriot', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 500-04.
- Hargreaves, R.P. 'The Maori Agriculture of the Auckland Province in the Mid Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 68,2, pp. 61-79.
- Herron, D.G. 'The Circumstances and Effects of Sir George Grey's Delay in Summoning the First New Zealand General Assembly', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand* 3, 21, 1959, pp. 364-82.
- Holcroft, H.M. 'Charlotte Godley: Letter Writer', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 567-71.
- Maddock, Shirley *These Antipodes: A New Zealand Album 1814-1854*, Auckland, 1979.

Cont. on
"Effect of liberal policies on Maori"

- Maning, Frederick *Old New Zealand: A Tale of the Good Old Times together with a History of the War in the North of New Zealand* [1887], Christchurch, 1930.
- Olssen, Erik 'Crown Colony 1840-1852' in Erik Olssen and Marcia Stenson, *A Century of Change 1800-1900*, Auckland, 1990, pp. 74-98.
- Orange, Claudia *The Treaty of Waitangi*, Wellington, 1987.
- Parsonson, Ann 'The Pursuit of Mana', in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 140-67.
- Sharp, Andrew 'FitzRoy Takes Command', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 472-76.
- Sharp, Andrew 'Grey at the Helm', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 488-94.
- Sinclair, Douglas 'Land Since the Treaty: The Nibble, The Bite, The Swallow', in Michael King (ed), *Te Ao Hurihuri: The World Moves On*, Wellington, 1977, pp. 107-28.
- Sorrenson, M.P.K. 'Maori and Pakeha', in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1988, pp. 168-93.
- Wake, C.H. 'George Clarke and the Government of the Maoris, 1840-45', *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand* 10, 39, 1962, pp. 339-56.
- Walker, Ranginui *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*, Auckland, 1990.
- Ward, Alan *A Show of Justice: Racial 'Amalgamation' in Nineteenth Century New Zealand*, Auckland, 1983.
- Ward, Alan 'Law and Law Enforcement on the New Zealand Frontier 1840-1893', *New Zealand Journal of History* 5,2, 1971, pp. 128-49.
- Wards, Ian 'The Generalship of Governor Grey 1846-52' in Peter Munz (ed), *The Feel of Truth*, Wellington, 1969, pp. 95-110.
- Wards, Ian *The Shadow of the Land: A Study of British Policy and Racial Conflict in New Zealand 1832-1852*, Wellington, 1969.
- Wards, Ian 'War on the Wanganui', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 505-09.
- Wilson, Ormond 'Hone Heke: The Challenge to the Crown', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 483-87.
- Wilson, Ormond 'The War in the North', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 477-81.
- Wood, G.A. 'The Creation of the Provinces', *New Zealand's Heritage*, pp. 594-99.