

## Correspondence

SOMETHING rather puzzling occurs in Ann R. Parsonson's article 'The Expansion of a Competitive Society' (*NZJH*, XIV, 1, 59) at the point where she is saying: 'Marsh Brown (Patuone) of Hokianga gave a feast to Mangonui Te Kerei of Kororareka in 1868, at which pigs, horses and cattle—as well as kumara, potatoes and dried shark—were distributed to the visitors, and the presentation was capped by a purse of 150 sovereigns.'

The total value of the gifts was estimated in 1868 to work out at about one thousand pounds. This would have been a very sizable part of the income (for that matter, of the available working capital) possible at that time to donors in those districts, as sundry reports of the period show.

Marsh Brown Patuone of Hokianga is not someone whose name comes readily to mind. Ms Parsonson's source (E.M. Williams, Resident Magistrate, Waimate, report 1 June 1868, *AJHR*, 1868, A-4, Appendix D, 30) named him only as Marsh Brown. Any attention to Williams's report and appendices will leave it beyond question that Marsh Brown is Marsh Brown Kawiti who is referred to by Claudia Orange in her article in the same issue of the *Journal*, p.67, as Maihi Paraone Kawiti. He was principal chief of Ngatihine, son of the Kawiti who figured in Heke's War, based on Waiomio inland of the Kawakawa—Waikare River sector where descendants still live. This is made clear in Williams's Appendix G, *ibid.*, and in the report of R.C. Barstow, Resident Magistrate of Russell, of a census taken in 1864 (enclosure in No. 5, *AJHR*, 1868, A-4, 8, dated 7 March 1868).

Nor is Mangonui Te Kerei of Kororareka well known. Mangonui Te Kerei was chief of Ngaitewake located at Rawhiti. Officially 'Kororareka' was superseded by 'Russell' in 1844 but the older style lingered for some years. It lingered in a legalistic fashion as 'the Hundred of Kororareka', the style used by Barstow in the report mentioned above. This report gives the location for Ngaitewake and Mangonui Te Kerei as Rawhiti which is some way from Russell, out towards Cape Brett, a location which implies difficulties in transportation of goods either by sea or overland, especially for a small community.

It is also hard to know quite what to make of Williams's report in his Appendix D. I doubt that he was present at the hui which Ms Parsonson instances, and I have no doubt that he was credulous about what he was told of what happened. Among the things advanced by Williams is a large tent for Mangonui and his people '250 feet long, conspicuous for its size'—conspicuous indeed, since not too far short of the length of a football field. If the tent is not easy to take, perhaps we may have further reservations: that 'About 1,000 Natives were present', for whom 'a long line of sheds' was erected for the visitors in addition to the accommodation for Mangonui and his people who at 1868 had decreased (so Barstow said) from the overall 90 of 1864. We may doubt the 'in all, over 2,000 baskets' of potatoes '130 paces long' of kits 'two deep and three high' displayed by Marsh Brown's people and the 'wall of kumara and potatoes' of the same

quantity displayed by Mangonui's. On the face of it, Mangonui's thirty-five aged rather than younger males and thirty-six similar females and nineteen youngsters under eighteen must have been taxed getting 2000 or so kits out of the ground, let alone to Kawakawa where the hui was supposed to have been held. Especially as Ngaitewake had since 1864 been harder hit and suffered more decline according to Barstow than other hapu of his survey, which hints that they were not in the best physical shape.

Potatoes, kumara, dried shark were given, and went into the feast. (Williams is a bit ambiguous about this.) Pigs, horses and cattle were 'also given in large numbers'. The horses possibly went to help transport. As the feast otherwise signally seems to have lacked protein except the dried shark, however favoured, it may be fairly taken that some fraction of the cattle and pigs also went into the feast. The point is not so much *giving* as exchanging or reciprocating, which does not necessarily diminish the force of Ms Parsonson's contention for competition but may suggest that cooperation was more the end. On one blunt point, Ngaitewake were scarcely in any position to compete with Ngatihine, not at 150:90 against. The gift of £150 may imply not competitive showing off, merely helping out.

Whatever the dubiousness about accuracy attaching to Williams's figures, what emerges is that Williams had reason to believe a large gathering occurred at the Kawakawa Flat, comprised by 'Marsh Brown's people' and 'Mangonui's people'. Those two groups primarily amounted to about 250, which leaves a hypothetical 750 to be accounted for as affines or affiliates. Now, while it is comparatively easy to postulate why Marsh Brown Kawiti should command 300 or so (or more) to testify to his prestige, it is at first not easy to make a like proposal for Mangonui.

Whatever the difficulties of communications and meetings between Waioio and Rawhiti, according to Williams Marsh Brown and Mangonui had 'of late years' repeatedly tried to outdo one another 'in extravagance', which may or may not imply that such meetings had increased attendances. Williams's eye, in short, was fixed on the outward show, the 'extravagance', and Ms Parsonson seems to subscribe to this view.

In spite of his misjudgments of material facts, if Williams is right at all, it is about competitiveness in respect of status, regardless of the depleted and seemingly afflicted condition of the communities, and the sharply depressed state of their economies. Considerations of mana may have unduly large consequences in behaviour; so may sensed deprivation, or desperation, as reactive behaviours. Are such considerations necessarily exclusive of others?

If it is true that repeatedly Marsh Brown and Mangonui arranged hui as Williams claims, why should the prestigious Marsh Brown bother to do so, going up against the apparently non-prestigious Mangonui, chief of a dwindling hapu which even by the terms of those days was out in the sticks? How might it have been that Mangonui was worth bothering about, least of all repeatedly?

Here Barstow, whom Ms Parsonson acknowledges, may help us. Barstow said he held evidence that Mangonui Te Kerei was an active King Movement sympathiser who during the Waikato war schemed to smuggle ammunition to Waikato. Barstow, if correct, reveals Mangonui's claim to status: his sister Matire was wife to Kati, brother of Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maori King. The same evidence said Marsh Brown's aid had been solicited, and he was promised that in event of the King's success he would become governor of all north of

Auckland. Since the Kawiti clan already had prestige, since the Ngaitewake were demonstrably not too well situated in spite of whatever accrued from Matire's marriage, Marsh Brown's situation was of a sort in which any prospect of competition from or with Mangonui was specious.

In 1868 the King Movement's prospects were poor, but not necessarily as yet irretrievably so. F.E. Maning (admittedly not the most reliable of authorities) thought that during the Anglo-Maori War years about one-third of northern Maoris were disaffected (AJHR, 1868, A-4, 2). Ngapuhi were customarily 'turbulent', Henry Williams's description of them. Within a couple of years they were expressing a further agitation, demanding a share denied them in the cut-up of Waikato land. The modes of being disaffected ramified. And Ngapuhi to whom Ngatihine were kin were not the only turbulent people.

In this context, the recurrent meetings of Marsh Brown and Mangonui, their hapu supplemented by 'their people', may take on a different aspect, scarcely competitive, substantially cooperative and supportive. Any question of King Movement sympathy and of any impulse to go beyond sympathising into overt activity is patently tricky. One may think to detect something in the documents of the time, but not as positively as one would wish to uncover. The meeting which appalled E.M. Williams by its extravagance was possibly the last of its alleged kind; by 1870 Maihi Paraone Kawiti had apparently shifted his hapu to Whangaroa (AJHR, 1870, A-11, 3) although in later April 1870 he was willing to be back at Waiomio to conduct Governor Bowen and his party through the caves there.

Since there has been reference to people being disaffected and since 1868 is under notice, one other feature of possible interest should at least be recognised. That is, the question of Pai Marire-Hauhau sympathy. Summarily, it is highly unlikely that Marsh Brown Kawiti was attracted to this.

A further, and final, point. Ms Parsonson appears to have fixed on an instance when competition was minimal and cooperation was preeminent. Let me connect this with another aspect of concern with affairs to the south. About ten years ago I was told, by an old woman brought up in and at that late time still attached to the tradition of Papahurihia's teachings, how Penetana Papahurihia and Aperahama Taonui went south conveying a significant gift to Te Kooti/Turuki, to discuss and to advise. It is most unlikely that the story has any factual truth to it. On the contrary, I think it quite possible to identify the two sources from which by misreport and reconstruction the story grew. The 'truth' was of a different sort. The gift—believed to be precious, although unidentified—was a sign of good faith, an earnest of common concern. Whatever the old lady's esteem for Papahurihia and Aperahama (which was considerable) there was no indication that in any way in her belief they competed for parity of esteem with Te Kooti, no indication of any sense of superiority-inferiority on either side.

Ms Parsonson's notions about a competitive society may deserve reconsideration. It is a pity that she blundered about the main parties in this particular matter and that she seems rather shaky about the geography of North Auckland.

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