(Adams, P., 1977: 107)

PETER ADAMS

FATAL NECESSITY

British Intervention in New Zealand
1830-1847

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moment and exerted a significant influence on colonial policy towards New Zealand. Indeed, the evidence it contained was probably the most important factor in Glenelg's complete abandonment of his opposition to the New Zealand Association and his offer of a charter. He described the despatch to the association's deputation as 'containing very important information respecting the natives in connection with the settlement & crimes of runaway convicts', 13 and the particular information to which he was referring is plain from the heavy underlinings and marginalia in the copy received at the Colonial Office on 18 December 1837.

Stephen and Gairdner already understood the realities well, 14 but now Glenelg, who had been dithering about trying to patch up the set of outworn expedients which constituted the Residency policy, was finally faced with the urgency of the situation in New Zealand. British subjects were settling there in increasing numbers. Some were criminals and desperadoes. Others were buying Maori land. A permanent British colony was forming. On the other hand, introduced diseases were ravaging the Maori population and, if the decline continued, the race would become extinct. Even Maori families who lived on the mission stations and under missionary care were being wiped out as rapidly as those in the villages who con-

Up until the middle of December 1837, Glenelg had favoured the argument of the protestant missionary societies: that colonization by whites invariably destroyed indigenous races; that this could be prevented in New Zealand if the country was left to the missions, backed by the Government; and that therefore the New Zealand Association must be opposed. At a stroke Busby's report destroyed the middle term of this argument. Haphazard white colonization of New Zealand was already occurring, accompanied by disastrous results for the Maoris. More important, the missions had failed to lessen the impact of this colonization, for the disastrous results were just as apparent among the Maori population under their immediate influence as elsewhere. The implication that somehow they were partly responsible along with the other Europeans in New Zealand was not lost on Dandeson Coates, † nor perhaps on the Colonial

Busby's description of the New Zealand situation gravely weakened the missionary societies' case. His own solution was for a British protectorate, under which sovereignty would be retained by the

† See below, p. 111.

^{*}These passages were particularly heavily underlined in the Colonial Office copy of Busby's despatch.

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