

finer. The traders, he explained, for the most part supply goods in exchange for Native produce—consequently they have very little money in circulation amongst them; and he had been in the habit of receiving articles of wearing apparel in lieu of cash; that he had accumulated a quantity of these. Part of these he had disposed of in obtaining material for a Court House, which would have been erected before this had the question between themselves and the Ngaitai been settled. I approved of this appropriation, and recommended him to dispose of the rest for whatever they would fetch, and in future to take such produce as could easily be convertible into money; for I felt sure the traders, if the case were properly represented to them, would give cash for this.

I introduced the subject of the proposal which had originated with them respecting the adjustment of the dispute between themselves and the Ngaitai, also Kawakura's amendment. Ngatawa said that he considered Kawakura himself to blame for the present uncertain state of things; that if Kawakura had acted according to his promise the case would have been settled. But as he remained at Whakatane instead of occupying his own property, he could not blame them for making the best arrangement they could to put an end to a difficulty which might at any time involve the two tribes in war.

These land disputes are the most difficult questions to settle; the final adjustment of them would be an incalculable boon to the country. If the Natives could be induced to give up all their lands into the hands of a Runanga composed of English Magistrates and independent chiefs, to be by them enquired into and definite boundaries decided upon, much would be done towards settling the country. But so wary are the Natives, that the question of inter-tribal boundary is seldom raised unless it is to annoy their neighbours. In fact it is looked upon in this district as almost equivalent to a declaration of war. In nineteen cases out of twenty it will be found that the tribal boundaries are disputed, and in the cases of hapus and individuals it will be found the same.

I think the "Whanau o Opanui" are changed for the better; they are not so noisy as they were when I visited them last. Ngatawa (with a little guiding) will, I think, make a good Assessor, but he has much to contend against; the Whakatohea have solicited him to resume his old profession of "Tohunga ta Moko," and have offered him a large sum to go over and "ta" some of his people, but he has steadily refused, saying that he is not now his own master. Returned in the evening to the Ngaitai pa.

6th.—Started early for Omairi. I had intended waiting till low water, so as to relieve our poor foot-sore horses, but as the weather was threatening, indeed raining, I was obliged to start on account of the Motu (Maraenui River), which is only just crossable at the best of times. After a six miles cruel ride over shingle and boulders we crossed the Motu, but the weather had by this time cleared up. At Whitianga we stayed a couple of hours to hold an open air Court. The case was this: a whaling party of Natives had paid 20s. as rent for a few yards square of rock, on which try-works had been erected. This money was claimed by two parties. Ngatawa seeing a disposition to use violence, very properly stepped in and took possession of the money, telling them that as soon as they had settled the question of proprietorship the party who had proved his claim should receive the money, but this they had never done satisfactorily. Ngatawa said that he had formed his own opinion from what he had previously known of the case, but wished to refer it to me and the Assessors accompanying me, in order that his people should not suspect him of partiality. After hearing the case it was decided that the money should be equally divided between the contending parties, as they both seemed to have a claim. This matter settled, we left for Omairi in the afternoon; arrived in the evening. The distance between Omairi and Whitianga is not great, but the road is fearfully bad, entirely from want of opening the road. Ngatawa proposed a very good plan for getting this work done, viz., to require men who were not able to pay fines to do certain portions of it. But Ngatawa informed me that the Natives were so extremely jealous about road making, that I had better not name it, but let it emanate from themselves.

7th.—I have been indisposed to day; renewed my cold from riding in the wet yesterday morning. Natives of this place assembled to ask about the state of things at Waikato, &c. Vague rumours reach them occasionally of bloody battles, always resulting in the deaths of thousands of troops; and so credulous are they that many of them believe these absurd stories; they were astonished when I told them that there had been no fighting since I visited them last, and that as far as I could see there was no likelihood of any fresh disturbance; that the Governor was anxious that peace and good feeling should be again restored between the two races inhabiting these Islands.

Here, as at other places, the Natives are very inquisitive as to our *tihanga*, and are anxious to obtain information. There is an evident desire amongst the intelligent young men to assimilate to our customs. The great drawback is the prejudice of the old men to what they look upon as innovation; but as these are going off fast, I hope a more satisfactory state of things will be established. The Runanga of this place, as well as at Te Kaha and Raukokore, was set on foot by Rue Rota Waitoa, there being no tribunal to settle their differences and disputes. These Runangas take cognizance of all misdemeanors which take place in their own immediate neighbourhood; they have managed pretty well here, but there is one tendency which seems almost insuperable from these Runangas, and I believe it is universally the case; that of entertaining the most frivolous questions. A word used in the heat of passion, a simple untruth, an obscene or offensive expression, are all visited and punished. They acknowledge Ngatawa as their Assessor, and in all cases of difficulty apply to him.

8th, Sunday.—Rain all day.

9th, Monday.—The river between this and Pariokura is so flooded we cannot cross our horses. We remain here till to-morrow. Hamiora Reweti (one of the returned slaves from the Ngapuhi) is a very sterling man, he is anxious to establish a school for the young men and children of his place, but he cannot get on for want of slates and books. I recommend that a supply of these be sent.