

SECTION VIII.

T A U P O.

No. 1.

REPORT FROM GEORGE LAW, ESQ.

Otawhao, February 13th, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report, for the information of His Excellency's Government, that, acting upon the authority of an official letter from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, dated Auckland, 13th January 1862, I proceeded to Taupo for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the Natives of that District with regard to the settlement of a European Magistrate amongst them, and generally to learn their views in reference to the institutions proposed to be introduced by His Excellency's Government.

January 22nd.—Left Otawhao. Arrived at Aratitaha.

January 23rd.—Arrived at the Waotu.

January 24th.—Arrived at the Whakamaru.

January 25th.—Arrived at Waimahana and Taha Pahaka. The Natives inhabiting this District form a portion of Ngatiraukawa, a very powerful tribe inhabiting the country extending from Maungatautari to the west side of Taupo. A portion of this Tribe is at present residing at Kapiti.

This tribe is composed entirely of King's Natives, with perhaps a few individual exceptions. I arrived at Taha Takaroa on Saturday afternoon, and fortunately finding the Natives at food, took the opportunity while they were all assembled of explaining to them the policy of the Government. I first read to them His Excellency's Circular addressed to the Natives, enlarging upon and explaining each paragraph as I proceeded. Upon concluding my remarks, I enquired whether they understood what I had just stated to them, and if they had any questions to ask me. I told them not to be in too great haste to answer me, to consider well what I had told them, so that their word when it was spoken should not be a "kupu noa." They replied that they understood what I had stated, and would give me their reply in the evening. When we met together in the evening, the Chief told me that they had thought over what I had told them, and that the word of the Governor was good. He asked me whether the Circular was quite true, and was to be relied on. In reply, I said that they might implicitly rely on the word of the Governor, whose greatest wish was to raise the Maoris from their present ignoble position, and bring them on a more equal footing with their fellow subjects the Europeans, and that he wished to effect this by the introduction of European laws and manners, instead of the old Maori usages.

As a proof of the truth of His Excellency's intentions, I told them that if they wished, I should stay with them as their Magistrate, to assist them in making laws, and establishing some of the good things spoken of in His Excellency's Circular. They immediately consented to this, and pressed me to take up my residence amongst them. I eventually consented to take up my residence amongst these people, as Tango Tango offers many advantages, such as wood, water, wheat, &c., which are not combined at any other place, besides the comparative shortness of the road for the purpose of carrying in supplies.

January 26th, Sunday.—At Pakataharoa.

January 27th, Monday.—When on the point of departure Te Matewaia (the Chief of this portion of Ngatiraukawa) again requested me to give him an assurance of the truth of my statement of Saturday; I complied with his request, and he appeared quite satisfied. I proceeded to Oruanui, where I found several of the leading men of this and the adjoining Native villages. They are all Queen's Natives, and gave me a very kind reception. When I told them the object of my visit they were very much pleased. These Natives before the breaking out of hostilities at Taranaki were engaged making a road (upon their own land) upon the mail line between Otawhao and Ahuriri, and are exceedingly anxious to recommence operations. They gave me a very pressing invitation to choose a *kainga*, and seemed disappointed when I told them that I could not do so, as the distance would be so great to bring in supplies. I proceeded on the same day to Papuwaiharuru: This *kainga* is the residence of Te Poihipi, the principal Chief of this (the north) end of Taupo, and is inhabited by Queen's Natives. The sentiments of Te Poihipi are so well known and have been so lately brought under the notice of His Excellency's Government, that I will not enlarge farther, but simply state that the invitation which I received at Oruanui was here repeated, and accompanied with many personal good wishes. I was obliged to return a similar answer.