

Thursday 27th.—Crossed the ridge, and rode down the Petani Creek. Lunched at Petani; thence to Napier, which we reached at 7 p.m. Great disappointment at his Excellency's non-arrival.

Friday, 28th.—I had intended to ride out to Mataiwi, where the Natives are collected at the grand "tangi" over the remains of Moananui, but was advised to send them notice of my arrival. Mr. Locke kindly rode over and fixed a meeting for Monday. He reported that the Natives were about 800 strong, and 400 or 500 more expected from Wairoa, Wairarapa, and elsewhere. All the leading chiefs of this part of the country were there, except Hapuku, who had made an excuse to go to meet the Wairarapa Natives, but probably to avoid the festivities in memory of his late rival and victor. Mr. Locke stated that during the previous night the resident Natives had very nearly come to blows with the party of Waikatos at the feast. A canoe full of tea had been prepared, when the Waikatos jumped into it and finally upset it. Renata was very indignant, and arms were being brought, when, by the intervention of others, the affair was stopped. Next morning a runanga was held, when the Waikatos pleaded in extenuation of their conduct that they only intended to do honour to their hosts, and had jumped into the canoe in order to be able to say that the Hawke's Bay Natives had provided them with a tea-pot big enough to swim in. They were, however, severely censured by the runanga, and the incident has probably not tended to increase the friendliness of the Ahuriri and Waikato Natives.

Saturday, 1st March.—Had interviews with various persons, particularly a deputation of gentlemen, consisting of Messrs. FitzGerald and Buchanan, on the subject of the leasing of the Ahuriri plains, from whom it appeared that, notwithstanding the caution contained in the Government Proclamation, they had been attempting to induce the Natives to lease their lands to them for purposes of colonization, &c. I expressed myself much annoyed at their interference, which appeared to me very gratuitous and calculated greatly to impede the plans of the Government for the settlement of Native Difficulties in this District. I was glad to learn that the Natives had given them the cold shoulder, and declined to treat with them, being satisfied to wait for the appointment of a Commissioner and the creation of the runanga.

Sunday, 2nd March.—

Monday, 3rd March.—The rain, which began last night, was pouring down in perfect sheets, but being anxious not to break my appointment I got an open trap, and, accompanied by the Superintendent (Captain Carter), Mr. George Cooper, Land Commissioner, and Mr. H. Browne, I started at 10 a.m. for Mataiwi, about nine miles off. Mr. Locke and Mr. Hamlyn (Interpreter) had preceded us early in the morning. I was not sorry that the weather was bad as it effectually prevented a crowd of Europeans following us from Napier, and also obliged us to hold our meeting in a weather-board house, where only the great chiefs were present. The conversation was consequently much more unreserved and practical than if it had been carried on in set speeches before 800 or 1000 people.

Renata began by welcoming me. He said he had heard of the Governor's intentions, which were good. That when Governor Browne was here the policy of the Government was all dark. The Natives saw the result of the dispute about Te Teira's land at Taranaki, and they knew that they had very similar disputes here. They believed that as soon as Governor Browne had beaten them at Taranaki we would make a similar excuse to begin war here and destroy them all. Therefore they formed the King, and sympathized with the Taranaki war party. Now, Governor Grey had come, and his thoughts were good; all was become clear (marama), and if we carried into practice that which we talked of, all would be well. He wished to know when the Commissioner would arrive.

In reply I explained the reasons why his Excellency had been prevented from fulfilling his intention of visiting them, but said I knew his thoughts on these matters, and proceeded to give them an outline of his proposed plans for their government, ending by telling them that the Commissioner would be appointed as soon as possible.

Renata replied that they entirely approved of what I said, but that there were some things which required immediate redress. First, there was the root of the evil, Waitara,—that it should be investigated.

I replied that the cause of the delay in that matter did not rest with the Governor, and told them of the offer which I had made to the Waikatos for the appointment of a Board of Enquiry. I gave this in full detail, describing exactly what passed at Hangatikei in Waikato, at Christmas last.

This statement "took them entirely aback." They said the offer was most fair, and they expressed great surprise that Waikato had never communicated it to them. They were very much excited, and Renata, Karaitiana, and the other leading chiefs consulted together a long time in whispers. At last they said, "the Government is no longer to blame in this matter; the wrong is now with Waikato. We will see what we can do; we will bring our weight to bear on Waikato." They seemed very much pleased that the Government had made this offer, and I suspect the conduct of the Waikatos in not accepting the offer and not consulting the other tribes about it, will greatly shake the adherence of these Natives to the King party. Indeed, those who have been watching them lately think there are many signs of an approaching rupture between them.

They then said there was another grievance, Mr. Colenso's occupation of the piece of land formerly given to the Church Missionary Society. This has long been a bone of contention between Mr. C. and the Bishop of New Zealand, who has unsuccessfully endeavoured for years past to eject Mr. Colenso. The latter is unpopular to the last degree with the Natives, and the