

OUTRAGE COMMITTED BY A MAORI.

7 D. No. 9

No. 5.

MR. KIDD TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Enderly, 5th October, 1863.

SIR,—

I had the honor of addressing you under date the 28th August, enclosing informations sworn before me by Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter relative to a criminal assault on the latter by a Maori named Hohepa, son of Honi Taotahi of Hikurua, the acknowledgment of which letter has not as yet reached me.

Mrs. Stephenson called on me yesterday to inform me that two investigations had taken place before the Commissioner, Mr. George Clark, (the Resident Magistrate for the district) Mr. Edward Williams, and several Native Assessors, full particulars of which, no doubt, will in due course be reported to you.

These investigations were finally closed on 2nd inst. without leading to the arrest of the offender, though he was present during the proceedings, boasting and bragging that his party were too strong to allow of his being arrested, and threatening that he would take the life of the first of the Stephenson family he should meet.

These threats were considered of such importance by King George and Riwih Hongi (both Assessors) that they went to Stephenson's house to warn them of their danger, ordering the younger son, who was tending sheep at some distance from the house, to go home, and advising them, if they pushed the matter further, to fly at once, without losing any time to look after the property.

The Natives, though refusing to give the offender up, offered to pay a sum of money or give some land, thus showing that there was no doubt on their minds of the offence having been committed.

Mr. Williams said he did not consider it prudent under the circumstances to take any further steps to arrest the offender or to make him amenable, as he was unwilling to endanger the peace of the district. The matter now rests with the Government, as it seems clear that the ordinary administrators of the law are unable or unwilling to bring this ruffian to justice.

If the Government of New Zealand is not able to uphold the majesty of the law and protect the persons of British settlers, the peace of the district must soon be disturbed, as the natural consequence will be that the settlers will lose confidence in the administration of the law, and take upon themselves the vindications of their wrongs, thus bringing about daily collisions with the Natives.

The present case is one to which it is not in human nature to submit: nor is it likely that British-born subjects will tamely submit to the violation of the females of their families without the attempt to protect them from such outrages, disgusted by such abortive proceedings of law.

I therefore feel it my duty to urge on the Government the necessity as well as the prudence of having this offender made amenable without loss of time, as delay will not only embolden the natives, but will also influence the minds of the settlers, and bring about a collision, which in the first instance must cause a large sacrifice of property and of lives.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS A. KIDD, J.P.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
Judicial Department,
Auckland.
