

NOTES BY THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, RELATING VISIT TO WANGANUI, AND THE SUBMISSION OF WI TAKO.

The Colonial Secretary begs to forward a copy of notes of his late journey to the South, relating more particularly to Wanganui and the submission of Wi Tako, the leader of the King party in Cook's Straits. He also encloses a report made by Mr. Buller, R.M., of what passed at the interview between the Colonial Secretary and "Wi Tako," which appears substantially correct.

The Colonial Secretary very much regrets that the Report to which he alluded in his notes as promised by Dr. Featherston the Superintendent of Wellington of his visit to the scene of hostilities on the Wanganui River and the Waitotara has not yet reached him, apparently owing to some irregularity connected with the current mail from Wellington. The Colonial Secretary would have sent the accompanying documents earlier, but waited the arrival of the mail, in the hope that he should be able to complete the series.

WILLIAM FOX.

Auckland,
5th July, 1864.

NOTES OF EVENTS AT TARANAKI, WANGANUI, WEST COAST, AND WELLINGTON.

22nd May, 1864.

Alarming news having arrived from Whanganui, to the effect that an attack on that settlement was expected to be made immediately by the Prophet Matiae and his followers, who had brought Captain Lloyd's head from Taranaki, and were exhibiting it to excite the passions of the Natives on this river, it was determined to send a detachment of troops to strengthen the garrison at Whanganui. As they could not be immediately collected at Auckland, I proceeded to Taranaki from Manukau, with orders from Lieutenant General Sir D. Cameron to Colonel Warre, C.B., commanding the troops there, to send on 300 men of his command.

Arrived at Taranaki at 9 p.m., on the 23rd May. Here I heard the welcome news of the successful resistance made by the friendly Natives at Whanganui to the attempted attack by the fanatics on the settlement. Colonel Warre lost no time in getting his men ready for embarkation, but their departure was delayed by time lost in discharging the steamer of a cargo of timber, and we did not leave till 5 p.m. on the 25th May, when 160 men were put on board, the rest to follow on the return of the vessel.

May 26th.—Arrived at Whanganui; I there found Dr. Featherston, the Superintendent of Wellington, who, on hearing the news, had gone to that place, and had proceeded up the river to Ranana, where the engagement had taken place, and had brought down some 20 prisoners, a large rebel flag, 9 yards long by 3½ wide. He had also visited Waitotara, on the coast north of Whanganui, where a gathering of rebel Natives had been reported, but he had seen nothing of them, and returned to town.

These events will no doubt be reported by Dr. Featherston himself, so I shall not go into their details.

I found several of the leading chiefs who had been in the fight, returned to town. They had broken their guns in the hand to hand engagement, and asked urgently for a supply. I therefore directed Mr. White, R.M., to procure as many double and single barrels as he could get, and present them to the leading chiefs. As they reported that fully 150 of the friendly Natives were without arms, I wrote to Auckland for a supply, which have, as I learn, been sent; and when in Wellington I directed 100 stand of percussion muskets to be sent, in order to arm those of the friendly Natives who were unprovided.

The double and single guns above mentioned I gave to the chiefs as presents for their bravery. The others I directed to be issued on an undertaking to return them when required. I also authorized an issue of trousers and serge shirts, which Dr. Featherston had promised.

I told the chiefs that pensions would be granted to the widows of those who had fallen; 10s. a week to those of great chiefs, 5s. to those of persons of less note, and that provision would be made for such as were maimed. I also directed Mr. White to make immediate presents to such widows as required it. Arrangements had already been made for provisioning the friendly Natives up the river, and I directed Mr. White to do the same for such families of those engaged in defence of the settlement as might require it.

I visited the hospital, where all the wounded were being very carefully treated by Dr. Gibson, the Colonial Surgeon, assisted by Dr. Davis, of the 57th Regiment. No distinction was made in the treatment of rebel and friendly Natives, but the latter requested that the former might be removed to some other place. This was desirable on account of the crowded state of the hospital, and a large room in the town was taken, to which the rebelwounded were removed.

I also visited the unwounded prisoners, 12 of whom were confined in a spare guard room at the barracks. Their countenances were scowling, and they were inclined to grumble at the restrictions put upon them; such as not being allowed to smoke in the house, on account of danger to the neighbouring magazine.

These prisoners were not surrendered altogether unconditionally. A memorandum made by Mr. Booth, who acted as Dr. Featherston's interpreter, which I append, states the circumstances, and Dr. Featherston told me that he considered it doubtful whether, if he had not held out the prospect of the prisoners being released on parole, as the friendly Natives requested, or at least not sent away from Whanganui, he would have got possession of them. Unfortunately there is very little accommodation for their detention there, and I doubt the propriety of releasing them altogether.