

PAPERS RELATIVE TO

No. 14.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. ROLLESTON to Mr. FENTON.

(No. 447.)

Native Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 14th September, 1867.

SIR,—

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. FitzGerald, to acknowledge your letter of the 3rd instant, suggesting that Mr. Mackay should be instructed to complete the Katikati purchase near Tauranga.

In reply, I am to inform you that the Government cannot very well take action in this matter until the Native Land Bill is passed.

I have, &c.,

W. ROLLESTON,

Under Secretary.

The Chief Judge, Native Lands Court, Wellington.

No. 15.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. MACKAY to the Hon. J. E. FITZGERALD.

(No. 257.)

Civil Commissioner's Office,
Auckland, 16th September, 1865.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose herewith for your information a copy of a letter written to me by Mr. Dickey in accordance with instructions given by Mr. Fenton respecting the Katikati Block, Tauranga, and apparently urging the immediate survey of the same.

It appears advisable that I should offer some explanation in this case, as the delay in completing this survey has been caused by me, for very grave political reasons which I think Mr. Fenton is unacquainted with. In order to properly understand these it will be necessary to enter into the previous history of the Katikati Block and its owners.

It appears that this and the other land at Tauranga originally belonged to the Ngatipukinga and Tawhera tribes. Afterwards the Ngatitamatera established a claim* over the block extending from Katikati to Te Puna. Ngaterangi came from the southward and conquered the Ngatipukinga; a portion of these removed to Manaia Hamaki, the remainder incorporated themselves with Ngaterangi. Ngatitamatera and Ngaterangi alternately occupied the land at Katikati above mentioned: many battles took place between them. The last occurred since the establishment of the Government of the Colony, when the chief Taraia Ngakuti, of Ngatitamatera, slaughtered and ate several Ngaterangi at Ongare. (This was generally considered, until Kereopa's late proceedings, as the last instance of cannibalism in New Zealand.)

When the Ngaterangi surrendered at Tauranga in August, 1864, they agreed to give up permanently one-fourth of all rebel lands to the Government, and to sell for two shillings per acre (I believe) a large block extending from Te Puna to Katikati, and it is said one thousand pounds deposit was paid on it. It will be observed that this block includes the Ngatitamatera claim.

On Ngatitamatera hearing of this arrangement they protested against the sale by Ngaterangi of the land at Katikati. The loyal chief Te Moananui and several others waited on the Hon. Mr. Fox, then Colonial Secretary and Native Minister, and urged their claims. It was then arranged that Ngatitamatera and Ngaterangi should each select six men as representatives of the tribes, and that Mr. H. T. Clarke, Civil Commissioner, Tauranga, and myself should act as arbitrators in the matter.

In December, 1864, the Natives of the two tribes met at Auckland, and the case was thoroughly investigated, as far as Te Moananui's claims were concerned. These, however, only extended over a very limited portion of the Katikati Block, the greater part being claimed by Taraia Ngakuti and his portion of the tribe Ngatitamatera. The decision of the arbitrators was that the block claimed by Te Moananui should be surveyed, valued, and the amount of compensation or consideration money, as determined by that valuation was to be equally divided between Ngatitamatera and Ngaterangi. It was also understood that Mr. Clarke and myself should attend at the survey to prevent any disputes about the boundaries, also to enable us to value the land.

The Natives requested that the survey should be delayed, as Ngatitamatera wished to remain at Hauraki and Auckland until the expiration of the peach-selling season. This was agreed to. Mr. Mantell approved of the award, &c.

On Mr. Clarke and the Ngaterangi returning to Tauranga they found the remainder of that tribe had deserted the settlement and joined certain Paimarire fanatics in the backwoods and mountains. To my astonishment I then received a letter through Mr. Fenton, informing me that Mr. Drummond Hay had been commissioned to proceed to Tauranga to survey the Katikati Block, and I was informed that if I wished to go there I must do so at once. Finding that neither Mr. Clarke, myself, or the Natives were consulted as to our convenience in the matter, and contrary to the arrangement so well understood by the Natives, I refused to go, and objected to Mr. Hay proceeding there.

It turned out that my refusal was most judicious, as the rebellious portion of the Ngaterangi sent a messenger to Te Moananui and Ngatitamatera, that if they came to Katikati to survey the land they would oppose them, and if they wished to draw the chain it should be over their necks.† Moananui then proposed taking an armed party to support him, but as it did not appear expedient to cause a renewal of hostilities at Tauranga, I put him off from time to time, especially as I found that some of the Ngatitamatera intended advancing claims to the lands which had formed the subject of the arbitration. Afterwards I obtained direct evidence that Ngatitamatera intended forming an armed party of 340 men of that tribe, Ngatimaru, and Ngatipaoa. They made Moananui believe that this was merely to protect him, but, in fact, their intention was to advance claims to all the land from Motukouru (Moananui's south boundary) to Te Puna. If I had sanctioned this proceeding, bloodshed would have followed as a natural consequence.

* From their being descended from Waitaha and Ranginui, also ancestors of the Ngatipukinga or Tawhera.—J. Mackay.

† This was considered by Ngatitamatera as a challenge to fight.