

PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE INTERRUPTION OF THE SURVEY OF CONFISCATED LANDS AT PATEA.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel McDONNELL to Captain HOLT.
(No. 17-1.)

SIR,—

Patea, 18th July, 1867.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of Government, the enclosed copies of letters received from Mr. Carrington, about six p.m. on the 16th instant. Immediately on receiving the information that the surveyors had been sent back by the Natives I determined to proceed to Oika at once, and accordingly directed the whole force in camp to parade at eight p.m., and asked Mr. Sergeant to endeavour to get forty volunteers from the Local Militia to hold the camp and protect the stores in my absence. I have much pleasure in stating that my call for men was most cheerfully complied with, and by seven o'clock the number required had paraded, and the guards were relieved. I put Captain Ross in command of the Local Militia, with Ensigns Sergeant, and Nowlan. At about half-past eight p.m. I paraded my men—strength as per margin,* and proceeded with Mr. Booth to cross the Patea River, the tide was about full, and a fresh in the river; it took some time to get men, horses, and a cart across, but as every one worked most willingly all difficulties were ultimately overcome. I then marched on to the Whenuakura, putting a light boat on the cart, and immediately on arriving commenced to get the men and provisions across; as the boat only held six men and two to row, this was a work of some time, the river being very rapid; however, by one a.m. on the 17th everything was across. I met Mr. Wray and his surveyors here, he was waiting instructions from Patea. I directed his surveying implements to be put on the cart and he and his assistants to accompany the force back to Oika, where we arrived about half-past two p.m. After disposing the force so as to completely command the village, I went, accompanied by Mr. Booth, Resident Magistrate, and Captain Cumming (unarmed), with a mounted orderly to the village, leading our horses, and leaving Captain Newland in command of the men, with instructions that in the event of my giving a signal he would at once come to our assistance. We got to the centre of the village without being heard, and found the Natives all asleep; the principal men were all in a tent, and I had to knock and call before they heard us. They asked us in, and after entering the tent, I said I wished to know their reasons for sending the surveyors back; their reply was, that no surveys would be permitted by them from the south bank of the Patea River to the Waitotara. I repeated the question, and received the same answer. I replied that I regretted their having sent the surveyors back as it gave unnecessary trouble, but, that I was determined the surveyors should begin in the morning. I then crossed the river (Whenuakura) with Captain Cumming, to see Tito Kowaru and his people, leaving Mr. Booth, Resident Magistrate, with the orderly to talk to the Natives and keep them engaged during our absence. I had a long conversation with Tito Kowaru, and two or three other chiefs, and I told them how vexed I was at the conduct of the Pakakohi in sending the surveyors back, and that I had returned with them, accompanied by 100 men to enforce the work, if required. He asked me if I had seen the Pakakohi, I said "Yes, and that Mr. Booth, Resident Magistrate, was now with them waiting for my return, and that they knew nothing of the men being so close, I had come to let him know first, that the Pakakohi might thank him, I had not taken them all prisoners for their temerity in sending the surveyors back, after what they had been told."

Tito Kowaru replied, "I have advised them (as you and Mr. Booth know) to allow the survey to proceed, without hindrance, but they would not listen to me; however, as you return, do not forget they sent the surveyors back in the daylight, and did not hurt any one or seize anything." I said, "that was in their favour," and promised to think of it as I went back. We then wished him and his people good night, and recrossed the river. On arriving at the tent, where I had left Mr. Booth, he told me he had had a long talk with the Natives, and they were all firm in their purpose of opposing the survey, but had not the slightest suspicion of any force near the place. I then tried to convince them of their folly, but to no purpose; so I told them we had brought the surveyors back with us, and in the morning they would commence work. We rose up and intimated our intention of breakfasting with them, and that we were not going far. I gave my ring as a token that I should return with Captain Cumming in the morning; the principal man (Rurangi) who ordered the surveyors back, said he would go to Patea with us. I told him we were not going back to Patea, but on the hill to sleep till daylight; he said "we will go together," so we went.

Captain Cumming had a five minutes start, and upon arriving at the summit of the hill (about 250 yards from the village), our force started up to receive us, and as the moon was shining brightly, the sudden appearance of so many armed men had a most startling effect on Rurangi. I led him through the men, and he sat down, evidently assuming as much composure as possible, and after a five minutes

* Staff:—Lieutenant-Colonel McDonnell, commanding; Captain Cumming, Adjutant, and Assistant-Surgeon Suther. No. 1 Company Volunteer Militia:—Captain Newland and Lieutenant Fooks; Sergeants, 3; Corporal, 1; Bugler, 1; Privates, 41. No. 2 Company Volunteer Militia:—Ensign, Von Rotter; Sergeants, 3; Corporals, 2; Bugler, 1. Privates:—Nos. 8 and 10 Company Taranaki Military Settlers:—Privates, 4. Patea Rangers:—Ensign Northcroft. Native Contingent:—Privates, 2. Total, 99 Non-commissioned officers and men.