

By threats he managed to obtain guides to conduct his men to these concealed stores. They returned to Opotiki shortly after our arrival with eight quarter-casks of loose powder; but not satisfied with this, Ropata still pursued his inquiries, and found that there was a further store of twelve casks, and the place of concealment was known only to one individual, a person named Eru Nopenope confined with thirty-six other prisoners in the redoubt.

Eru, under a strong escort of Ropata's men, guided them to the spot, many miles in the forest, and the whole stock was brought in, together with a bag of ready-cast bullets. The whole loss to the enemy was, therefore, twenty quarter-casks of powder, and a bag of bullets.

I have gone somewhat minutely into the account of the expedition conducted by Ropata, and the subsequent able co-operation of Kepa and Topia, because I think it due to those chiefs that the facts should be recorded of the services they have rendered the Colony, and as a proof that we have the means within our reach, if judiciously and properly managed, of punishing those marauders who have for years past been the terror of the East Coast settlements.

On the 9th and the 11th instant, the witnesses against the prisoners (thirty-five in number, said to be of Te Kooti's immediate party) underwent a preliminary examination, and thirty-two of the prisoners were committed under "The Disturbed Districts Act, 1869," to take their trial for various offences under that Act. The other three, being boys, were placed in Ropata's charge.

The most notorious of these men are—Tamati Tarahau, deeply implicated in the Poverty Bay massacre, and Te Tauaro, *alias* Tutauanui, for active assistance to Te Kooti. This man is also the principal in the murder of a military settler at Tauranga, named Campbell. This murder was perpetrated on or about the 7th January, 1867.

Eru Nopenope admitted, during examination, having taken an active part in the proceedings of Te Kooti.

Thirty-one of the prisoners were shipped on board the "Star of the South" on the 11th instant, together with the whole of the Wanganui expeditionary force.

Just before embarkation the Hon. the Native Minister revisited the camp of the Wanganuis to give his decision regarding the women and children under the charge of Topia, about whom there had been several warm discussions amongst the allies.

Mr. McLean explained that the Government did not consider women and children in the light of prisoners, and that, therefore, the women might elect with which of their relatives amongst the loyal Natives they would remain, the only condition being that they did not return to the disaffected Natives. The decision was acquiesced in and carried out, the chief part of the women choosing to remain under the charge of Wiremu Kingi, of the Ngaitai, a sufficient evidence of the estimation in which that influential young chief is held by the Natives generally.

This settled, the serious charge brought against the Whakatohea, of complicity with Te Kooti, had to be considered. The principal evidence against them was contained in certain letters found at Maraitai purporting to be signed by the Chief Ranapia and two others; and I beg to refer you to former correspondence on this subject, in which I endeavoured to show that it was inadvisable to entrust the Whakatohea indiscriminately with Government arms.

The Hon. the Native Minister addressed the Whakatohea in terms of strong disapprobation for the duplicity shown by some of them, but he at the same time expressed a willingness to believe that the complicity complained of emanated from a few individuals, and not from the tribe generally. That it had been a matter of deliberation with him whether they ought not to be either removed altogether from the district or be disarmed.

Ranapia pleaded for himself. He said he was quite innocent of the charge brought against him. He recounted the services he had rendered to the Government against the Hauhaus. He reminded Mr. McLean that, when Opape was attacked by Te Kooti, he succeeded in making his escape, carrying with him all the arms and ammunition intrusted to his keeping by the Government, and asked whether it was likely, if he favoured Te Kooti's designs, he would have done so? The Whakatohea who were with Te Kepa and the Wanganui's also pleaded the services they had rendered. They stated that most of Te Kooti's men who were killed in the late expedition to Waioeka met their death at their hands, and that they thought that was sufficient evidence that they did not sympathize with his cause.

These statements deserved consideration, and the Hon. the Native Minister told them that certain members of the tribe were suspected on very good grounds, and that a very careful watch would be kept on them. That Ropata Wahawaha should be intrusted to look after them, and also that the Chiefs Wiremu Kingi, Te Tatana, and Te Hata, who were living much nearer to their settlements than Ropata, would be required to visit them occasionally, and that they should all live in one pa, and not, as heretofore, scatter themselves over the country. Ropata then addressed the Whakatohea. He told them that he accepted the responsibility, and that if he heard of any misbehaviour on their part he would himself punish them. Wiremu Kingi also spoke, and told the Whakatohea plainly that he did not feel altogether safe with such troublesome neighbours, but that he and his friends were willing to carry out the wishes of Mr McLean, not that he was very sanguine that any great good would result.

On the 12th, the s.s. "Rangatira" arrived off the Opotiki River, under charter of the General Government. As soon, therefore, as the tide served, the "Sturt," having embarked the whole of the Ngatiporou, steamed out to her, and transhipped a good part of the Native forces.

Ropata carried with him the fifty prisoners he had taken in his expedition, with the intention of looking after them until the country was more settled.

It is due to the chiefs and Natives of the different expeditions to state that during the whole of their stay at Opotiki they behaved in the most orderly, temperate, and exemplary manner; not a single complaint was made against any of them. The embarkation was also carried out in the same orderly way, without accident or mishap of any kind.

On the night of the 12th we anchored in Hicks' Bay. Early next morning the Native Minister, accompanied by Ropata, visited the Chiefs Te Ihairaira, Houkamau, and Mokena. The question of the land lying between Hicks' Bay and Tologa Bay, over which the Government had put in a sort of claim, was discussed, and Mr. McLean told them that in consideration of the good conduct of the tribe, and the great service they had rendered to the Colony, he would, on the part of the Government, relinquish,