

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

No. 1.

His Honor J. D. ORMOND to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

Napier, 5th November, 1870.

I have the honor to transmit a report by Mr. Locke of a meeting recently held at Tapuaeharuru, on the occasion of a visit of the Ngatiraukawa to the chief Poihipi, which meeting Mr. Locke attended by my direction, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the representations made by the Taupo Natives—to the effect that the Ngatiraukawa were anxious for more friendly relations with the Government, and for employment on road works—were correct.

On the whole, I consider the tone of the meeting satisfactory, and hope, before long, the opening of the country by roads will be assisted by these Natives. I have already communicated the purport of this report by telegraph.

I may add that Messrs. Locke and Bold have returned from Rotorua to Taupo, and that no reply has as yet been received from Ngatiraukawa respecting commencing road work.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

J. D. ORMOND.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Mr. LOCKE to His Honor J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Tapuaeharuru, 29th October, 1870.

I have the honor to inform you that on Thursday, 20th October, I left Napier, accompanied by Mr. Bold, for the purpose of meeting a portion of the Ngatiraukawa and Ngatituwharetoa Tribes, living between Taupo and Cambridge on the Waikato, and on the west shore of Taupo Lake, who are desirous of abandoning the unfriendly attitude they have assumed since the commencement of the war in 1860 to the present time; and also for the purpose of arranging with the Natives of the Taupo district, including Ngatiraukawa, for opening up roads in this part of the country, for which the Natives have expressed a desire, and are anxious to take contracts for the necessary works.

We arrived at Tapuaeharuru on Sunday evening. On our way up we inspected the road work being done by Rawiri Kahia and his people (about twenty-seven men) between Te Haroto and Turangakumu. The portion of the Taupo Road they are engaged in opening up will be a great improvement, being capable of being made, at a comparatively small expense, a good dray road, at the same time shortening considerably the distance travelled by the old Maori track.

On Monday I held a preliminary meeting with Ngatiraukawa, when the usual speeches of welcome, &c., passed, in which they expressed in strong terms their desire to cease living on the present unfriendly terms.

Tuesday I was engaged all day holding a Court, and settling the different disputes that had arisen since my last visit. This part of the duty has to be performed under great disadvantages, the magisterial and other questions having to be settled in any Maori whare that can be obtained in the pa for the occasion.

On Wednesday morning, according to previous agreement, the principal meeting was held, when a free discussion of the several points of interest was invited by me. I desired the Natives to be open and candid in their speech. Poihipi and Hohepa also addressed them in the same strain.

The first of Ngatiraukawa who spoke was Perehama Te Tohi, who stated that the peace they desired to make was genuine on their part, and he hoped laws and regulations would be made so as to carry on the government of the country, so that all could participate, &c. Then followed Hemi Aranui, of Te Waotu, somewhat in the same strain, saying we must all assist each other in putting down evil. He would tell me candidly that he and his people were sincere in their desire for peace, and to return to the quiet way of living that existed before the war. He could assure me that in a short time the roads through the country would be thrown open to all; but Tawhiao was their principal chief. The Queen was the Queen of the whole Island; but Tawhiao was their head. He would never alter from what he had now said regarding his desire to end all troubles, whatever others might think.

Then followed Paraone Taupiri, of Waotu, to the same effect, that from henceforth we must walk arm in arm, &c. Then Piripi Te Hiko, of Ao-te-Aroa, somewhat after the same manner. Then Kerei Te Tuhihi, of Arawhenua, who stated that the roads and telegraph, unless carefully conducted, might cause trouble; and that it would take time for all parties to gain confidence in each other, and feel that one party would not turn on the other by-and-by. Te Paerata, of Whakamaru, and others also spoke.

Poihipi then asked them whether the road through to Tauranga by way of the Niho-o-te-Kiore, and also to Cambridge, would cause trouble. They answered, "Both will go before long. The road through to Cambridge requires time. There would not be any trouble, perhaps, about the other; but let us go back and talk over what we have said and heard here first; we are satisfied, but let us speak to our friends and to Tawhiao before steps are taken. This should prove to you we are sincere."

Heuheu then asked them whether they were willing to give up their religion which was taught them by Te Kooti. They answered that it was taken wholly from the Scriptures, but they wished to hear what I had to say about it.