

## FURTHER REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

### No. 1.

The RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Upper Whanganui, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate's Office,

SIR,—

Whanganui, 23rd April, 1872.

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Government, that Mete's peace meeting held at Putiki on the 17th and 18th days of this present month, passed off most satisfactorily. I attended by special invitation, and took notes of the speeches, which I am about forwarding for publication in the *Waka Maori*.

The object of the meeting was the confirmation of peace and unity, more particularly amongst the Whanganui Natives, from the source of the river to its mouth, and was the third meeting of the kind held since January, 1871; the first having been held at Aomarama, the second at Taumarunui, and the third and final meeting at Putiki. The prime object of these meetings on the part of the Government Natives has been the extension of peace and quietness amongst all those tribes who had hitherto kept aloof, and been engaged in hostilities against the Queen. I am in a position to state that their tendency has been highly pacificatory, and I believe good will result therefrom.

The Whanganui Natives deserve a letter of commendation for their efforts in furtherance of peace, which would encourage them to do likewise in the future.

Paetahi, Rewi's cousin, and other Waikato Natives, were present; they came down with Topine, Ihau, and the other head river chiefs, including Pehi Turoa and Tahana. Tamehana, Matene, Ihakara, and Matiaha, of Wairarapa, were likewise present, as also Wi Hapi, Noah, Ngawaka and others.

A female child was figuratively spoken of as the emblem of peace; and a dogskin mat and blanket, representing Native and European clothing, were produced, and the ceremony gone through of enveloping therewith what was supposed to be a female child, which was then handed over by Tahana Turoa to Topine, and accepted by him; thereby signifying that the whole of the Whanganui Natives had again united for peace.

Paetahi and party expressed satisfaction at meeting with Europeans; referred to Maori King's decrees about land, roads, &c., and their having abstained from selling land; and charged the Government Natives with being at variance on such questions. Rauparaha's speech in support of law, &c., carried much weight with the meeting, and was frequently referred to by subsequent speakers. Mete and Kemp likewise spoke frequently in the same strain, as also Pehi, who enlarged upon the necessity of peace being extended to the tribes throughout the country.

The Horowhenua dispute was referred to, and Tamehana stated that the claims of his tribe would be referred to the Land Court, and wished Major Kemp to agree to separate surveys being prosecuted at one and the same time, with a view to a final settlement of the dispute in said Court. Kemp persisted in the desirability of a meeting being first held to discuss the question, and is now preparing for same.

The Murimotu dispute was afterwards gone into, but no decision came to in the absence of Topia, who was blamed by Mete for his opposition after the boundary had been agreed to by the assembled tribes with his concurrence. I strongly urged the Natives to refrain from quarrelling over their lands, and to have recourse to the law for a settlement of all disputes, and by no means to resort to force; that the law was the preserver of both life and property, and that by quiet discussion and an appeal to the duly constituted Courts, all their grievances would be redressed, and life and property saved. The pushing on of the Murimotu survey by Te Aro and party, has been the cause of much excitement amongst the Natives, and a collision at one time seemed imminent, and I believe blood would have been shed had not some of the chiefs interfered, and strongly opposed anything like a resort to arms. I am very much afraid that this question of disputed boundaries, and prosecution of the surveys thereof by one or other of the disputants, may, some day or other, lead to serious results, and that the peace of the country will be disturbed thereby. I think it only right to mention this, and I do so conscientiously, and from an honest conviction based upon information derived from Maori sources.

With regard to the gold prospecting business, both Mete and Kiritahanga, of Ranana, have received letters from head river chiefs asking them to prevent it. Topine is, however, very persistent, and wants to take up William M'Donnell on his return, against the wishes of Pehi, Mete, Kemp, and others. The papers here have taken up the matter very warmly—at the instigation, no doubt, of the M'Donnells—and have characterised my conduct in no measured terms, charging me with *falsehood* and duplicity to serve my own private ends; of which abuse I intend to take not the slightest notice, knowing that I have only done my duty in the matter, and for the good of the public; in which course I trust the Government will bear me out. Mete tells me he received a letter from Rewi asking for some packs of cards, and Mete has replied enquiring as to the meaning of such a request, which is differently interpreted by the Natives here, either as being in favor of, or otherwise, of gold prospecting.