

No. 21.

The GENERAL GOVERNMENT AGENT, Auckland, to the Hon. Mr. ORMOND.

THIS is simply an outrage on the part of Winiata; the land upon which he is living at Kopuru was a gift from the Crown to him, and is held under grant. He insists now that the land on both sides of the Kopuru Creek belongs to him, whereas the creek is his boundary in the grant, the land on the opposite side having been subsequently sold to Mr. Walton, and a saw mill, valued at £30,000, erected on it. Winiata is a turbulent man, and as he has some followers trouble might arise out of any attempt to maintain the right of the mill owners by force. Recommended that the advice of the Attorney-General should be taken as to the legal steps proper in the case.

DANIEL POLLEN,
Agent General Government.

No. 22.

H. T. KEMP, Auckland, to the UNDER SECRETARY Native Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Civil Commissioner's Office, 13th February, 1872.

In compliance with instructions from the Hon. J. D. Ormond, I left Auckland on the 31st ultimo, accompanied by the Native chief Paul Tuhaere, to report upon and to endeavour to settle a serious dispute that had unfortunately arisen between the owners of a part of the site on which the Kopuru Saw Mills are erected on the river Wairoa, in the District of Kaipara, and a chief of the name of Winiata Tomairangi, an influential member of the Hokianga Rarawa tribe, and a resident on a section adjoining the mill.

I have now the honor to furnish a report of the steps taken to bring about a good understanding upon this important question, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, the particulars of which have already been supplied in a special report by Mr. Rogan, and transmitted with a sketch to your office on the 31st January. Mr. Rogan had, as you will notice, with his usual foresight and discretion, recommended that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, some other officer should be appointed to come between the disputants, and this recommendation, approved as it was by Mr. Ormond, left us in a great measure unfettered in dealing with some of the more intricate points under consideration.

Having arrived at Helensville, Mr. Rogan politely sent us down in his boat, and on arriving at Mairatahi, Te Keene's station, where a large body of the Natives of the district had assembled to discuss matters of local importance, we were invited on shore; having met with a friendly welcome, followed by a war dance for the occasion, speeches were made and replies given, touching especially on the question before us, and resulted in Te Keene, Paraone, and Pairama, the principal chiefs of the district joining our party, and thus throwing in the weight of their influence on the side of peaceful negotiations.

Having reached Te Kopuru, the site on which perhaps the largest steam saw mills in the Colony are erected by the enterprising firm of Messrs. Walton and W. S. Grahame, of the value of between £30,000 and £40,000, now on the eve of completion; we were received by Winiata Tomairangi, and conducted at once to his settlement close by.

On the day following the question (which during the night had been treated by the chiefs in a conciliatory spirit) was opened with some little formality, the chief Abraham Taonui having by this time arrived, an animated discussion ensued. The ground upon which Winiata's claim was based rested chiefly upon the written assurance given to him by Major Heaphy, acting for the Provincial Waste Lands Commissioner, dated 26th February, 1867, a translation of which is herewith enclosed; these lines, which were still visible, correspond with those cut by Mr. Palmer in 1864 in the presence of Mr. Cobbold, and which then formed a Government Reserve.

Winiata Tomairangi received his grant on the 30th December, 1865, and he appears to have lost sight of the fact that in acquiring the land through the intercession of Mr. Rogan, the Provincial Government made it a consideration that the former lines should be cancelled, and that the creek should henceforth become the dividing line.

After entering into all the details connected with the purchases of the section, which Mr. Rogan had taken some pains to accomplish for the benefit of Tomairangi and his people, the production of plans, and the translation of Crown grants, the claim to the line in dispute was finally and, I think, honorably withdrawn by Winiata, and the question amicably and definitely settled. Considering the agencies said to be employed, and the advice under which he was acting, we were all agreeably disappointed.

On the succeeding day, the 6th February, we were invited by Mr. Walker, the manager, to be present at the starting of the mill. The ceremony of christening the monster wheel having been gracefully done by Mrs. Walker, Winiata united with the rest of the company in wishing success to the Kopuru Mill, upon which an excellent speech was given by Paul Tuhaere, the substance of which I was called upon to explain, and though imperfectly, I felt much pleasure in doing.

In bringing this report to a conclusion, I desire to bring under the notice of the Hon. the Native Minister the exemplary conduct of the Kaipara chiefs, who were present and accompanied us on this mission, but more especially the intelligent manner with which Paul Tuhaere (among his own people) conducted the negotiations, and which without their steady co-operation must have ended at least in further postponement, if not in failure, in the settlement of an unpleasant and embarrassing question.

I have, &c.,
H. T. KEMP.