

No. 21.

The CIVIL COMMISSIONER, New Plymouth, to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 26th August, 1872.

In further reference to the matter referred to in my telegram of the 17th instant, from Opunake, on returning from the South, I have now the honor to report that on the 10th instant I left New Plymouth, with a surveyor, for the purpose of commencing the skeleton survey of the land north of Waingongoro. Having some matters to attend to at Opunake, I remained there until Monday, the 12th instant, when I sent on word to the Ngatiruanui Natives that I should be at Kaupokonui the following day, Tuesday, if they wished to see me before commencing the survey. At noon on Tuesday about thirty Natives arrived from Omuturangi, when the Natives working at roadwork near the Kaupokonui Bridge, under Manaia and Reihana Wharehuia, stopped working for the purpose of discussing the question of the survey being proceeded with. The talk was kept up during that day and part of the night, and was resumed the following day and continued till some time in the afternoon, when the Omuturangi Natives returned. There was no violence or threatening language during the discussion, but a decided opposition to the survey of the land, and arguments against the confiscation, which it would be useless to give in detail. They requested me to send the surveyor and his chain back to New Plymouth, and made a special request to see the chain, which I brought out and warned them not to injure it. The chain was taken possession of twice by the Omuturangi party, which I allowed them to do for form's sake. It was returned to me by Titokowaru's brother, Nuku.

I explained to them that I had been instructed by the Government to commence the survey, and warned them against committing themselves by any unlawful obstruction.

After the Omuturangi Natives left I engaged six Natives for the survey, and the following day I rode over the block between Kaupokonui and Waingongoro with the surveyor, to give him an idea of the work necessary for a skeleton survey, and to decide upon a place to stop at, to be as near as possible to the work. The old village, Te Kanae, where Manaia and Reihana Wharehuia and their people were living before the renewal of hostilities in 1868, is about a central position, and the only place where there was a whare; we therefore decided to make that the head-quarters for the survey staff, and selected a house of Manaia's, as all the others were very dilapidated.

On returning to Kaupokonui in the evening, I told Manaia that I had decided on his house at Te Kanae for the survey party to stop at, to which he assented. On Thursday night there was a meeting held at Manaia's place, on the other side of the river to where I was stopping. It was a meeting of Manaia and Reihana Wharehuia's people, the result of which was that early the next morning two of their Natives (Ngatai Himiona and his son) went to the Kanae and burnt every house there, which proceeding I have reason to believe Manaia and Wharehuia were privy to. I was talking to them a long time on Friday, fully intending to proceed with a trial of the survey. Manaia professed to be very *pouri* about the burning of his house. I should be sorry to accuse him wrongfully, but my own opinion is, that he was more pleased than otherwise, and convinced me that there was an organized opposition to the survey of the land. I explained to them that the land taken would be paid for, but did not tell them how much per acre, and I am sorry to see the price named in my instructions is published in a Whanganui paper. How it came to be made public I know not, and can only suppose some one who saw my instructions must have foolishly let it be known. There was no cutting of the chain, as stated in the paper, although they had it in their possession.

This was how I left the question, on leaving the district hurriedly, on account of the alarming reports about Te Kooti; and considering it would be injudicious to leave the surveyor to attempt anything in my absence, I instructed him to return to New Plymouth.

It is difficult to decide how far the Natives may carry their opposition to the survey, if proceeded with. Some are of opinion that they would not have recourse to violence, whilst others are of opinion that they would. I shall be willing to try the question, if the Government wish it, and should like to make the Waihi camp my head-quarters.

There are other influences operating upon the minds of the Natives besides their own objections. The week before I went to Kaupokonui, Captain William McDonnell was there, trying to lease the land between Waingongoro and Inaha of them. He must have been well aware that the Government had not abandoned the land, and that such interference was only calculated to embarrass pending arrangements for the acquirement of the said land for settlement.

I have, &c.,

R. PARRIS,

Civil Commissioner.

No. 22.

MEMORANDUM by the Hon. D. McLEAN for the SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS.

MR. MOORHOUSE,—

The settlement of the confiscated lands on the West Coast being a matter of great importance to the Colony, I am anxious that you should be put in possession of the views of the Government generally on the subject.

One of the leading difficulties arises from the number of claims made by Natives to portions of the confiscated land, which have thus greatly diminished the available extent, and have led to the existence of a considerable misapprehension regarding the area for disposal.

Certain published returns showed 1,400,000 acres at the disposal of the Crown. After the prosecution of a careful inquiry, I have found the above to be a highly exaggerated estimate.

South of the Stoney River, and between it and the Waingongoro, a small block at Opunake, containing 1,400 acres, is the only land over which the Government can exercise any right; the remaining part has either been allotted to or is claimed by Natives.