

No. 42.

Mr. J. GRINDELL to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Sir,—

Wellington, 2nd July, 1872.

In pursuance of instructions received from His Honor the Superintendent, I left Wellington on the 4th of June last, and arrived at Otaki on the 5th.

I remained in the neighbourhood of Otaki for some days, and had several interviews with the Natives. I also visited Tamihana Te Rauparaha, at Te Horo, about eight miles from Otaki, and remained two nights with him. I found the Natives generally opposed to any subdivisional boundaries being surveyed between the claims of the various hapus, the idea being to unite as a whole against the Ngatiapas and other tribes opposed to them, with a view of getting their right as a tribe to the entire coast district first investigated by the Land Court, before entering into any disputes relative to minor internal claims amongst themselves. Mr. Thompson was, therefore, stopped in his survey inland of the Otaki river by a section of the Ngatihiua, residing at Otaki, and told to continue the survey along the coast. I assumed a decided attitude in the matter, and told them that the Court would certainly not sit until we had prepared a proper map for its guidance, and that if this were not done, the whole question would still remain open and unsettled as before, in which case the Government could not buy any land which they might wish to sell. I insisted that the survey should be so made as to enable us to cut up the country into blocks if so required at the sittings of the Court. I said there could be no objection to their taking up the question as a tribal right, but that we must have the map so prepared that each section of the tribe could go in for its own claim at the same sitting of the Court, so as to save expense of second survey, and loss of time. Eventually (on Wednesday, the 12th), it was determined that the survey should be permitted to be carried on without any further interruption.

On Thursday, the 13th, Mr. Dennan, surveyor, arrived per coach, and on the 14th, I arranged for him to carry on the work south of Otaki, upon which Mr. Thompson had been engaged. The latter gentleman I instructed to traverse the beach north of the Otaki river, whilst I proceeded to Horowhenua with Mr. Alzdorf, to ascertain the feeling of Te Muaupoko in reference to the survey of the internal boundaries in that locality, in dispute between them and the Ngatiraukawa. It was my intention to set both these gentlemen to work at once at Horowhenua, if I found the Muaupoko willing for the survey to proceed. I arrived at Mr. Hector McDonald's house, at Horowhenua, on the night of Saturday, the 15th, and on Monday morning, accompanied by that gentleman and Mr. Alzdorf, I proceeded to the Muaupoko settlement. I may here mention that Mr. McDonald, who possesses considerable influence with the Natives in that district from his long residence amongst them, has used every endeavour to bring the Muaupoko to reason, and to induce them to allow the surveys to proceed. I spent the whole of that day reasoning with these people. Kawana Hunia, of Ngatiapa, had been there, but had left the day before (Sunday). Some of his people however, were present, also Ngatuere, of Wairarapa, and some of the Ngatikahungunu people. They claimed the whole coast from north to south, and said the Ngatiraukawa had no right to any part of it. They positively refused to allow the country in their locality to be surveyed, and protested strongly against the surveys of other parts of the coast at Otaki and elsewhere, declaring that the whole must be discontinued until they had given their consent. Eventually, however, Te Rangirurupuni (properly their chief, and certainly the most reasonable amongst them) said he saw no objections to Watene, of Ngatiraukawa, surveying the boundary claimed by him, and advised that the surveys should be permitted to proceed. This occasioned a division, and a hot dispute amongst themselves. At length, seeing that the survey could not be peaceably made, I determined to abandon it for the present. I, therefore, told them I would not proceed with the survey of the boundaries of Horowhenua until the return of Major Kemp from Auckland, and that in the meantime I would employ the surveyors in laying out the boundaries of Ngatiraukawa north and south of their district. To this, the majority agreed, but some still grumbled, and insisted that the surveys should cease altogether. We then left them, and returned to Mr. McDonald's house. In the morning, Te Rangirurupuni came to see me, and told me that if I thought proper to go on with Te Watene's boundary I could do so; that a party would come and protest against it; but that he did not think they would forcibly interfere. I told him it was not the wish of the Government to force the surveys in opposition to any tribe, or section of a tribe, but to do it with the full and free consent of all parties concerned, and that, therefore, I should adhere to my promise of waiting till Kemp's return.

On Tuesday, the 18th, I called at Poroutawhao, on my way to Foxton, and informed the Ngatihiuas of that place of the arrangement I had made respecting the survey of Horowhenua. I told them Mr. Alzdorf would work from Manawatu southwards, and they said when the work reached their district they would be prepared to traverse their boundaries with him.

I then went on to Foxton, and on the 20th, accompanied by Mr. Alzdorf, I visited the Ngatiwhakare section of Ngatiraukawa, at Hikaretu, a settlement some ten miles up the river from Foxton. These are the people to whom an advance of about £200 worth of provision has been made on account of Kaihinu West block. I had no difficulty whatever with them. They were anxious for the survey to be commenced at once, and ready to point out their boundaries when required. I arranged with them that Mr. Alzdorf should at once commence the survey of this block (which adjoins the Ahu-o-Turanga block acquired by the Government), and work southwards towards Horowhenua.

On Saturday, the 22nd, I went to Oroua, a settlement of the Rangitane tribe, allies and relations of the Muaupoko of Horowhenua. A number of the people being absent at other settlements up the river, I decided to return to Foxton, and revisit them on the Monday following. In the meantime, Hoani Meihana sent a messenger to those who were absent, requiring them to meet me at Oroua on that day; and also to the Ngatiraukawa, at Papakiri, a settlement lower down the river.