

“Natives were let off on payment of a shilling each, and the promise not to offend again. The survey of Kahau was then completed without opposition. Mr. Buller has been instructed by telegram to feel his way to a compromise, by offering Miritana a remission of the penalty, if the tribe promise not to offer any further resistance.”

On issuing the summons to the Natives, Mr. Buller had telegraphed that they had not appeared, and that warrants for their apprehension had been issued. “Mr. Fox and I,” he added, “proceed to Rangitikei to-morrow to see the warrants executed. I am persuaded that a little firmness will put an end to the opposition.”

This was, however, a mistaken opinion: new disturbances broke out again almost immediately. Mr. Fox had directed that “for the present no further attempt be made to forward the general survey;” and on the 6th January, 1870, Mr. Buller, who had the general control of affairs in the district, and under whose orders the Provincial Government surveyors were acting, determined that it was useless to proceed with the trig. survey, and that they should only go on laying out those reserves which were likely to be unopposed. The provincial authorities inquiring into this, Mr. Buller replied, —“The survey was not stopped by my advice, but under instructions from the Hon. the Premier, which it was my duty to carry out. Mr. Fox’s orders were, to proceed cautiously, and to stop the survey and report the moment any fresh opposition was offered. This was done. As soon as Mr. Fox came in from Rangitikei I obtained his approval to a certain course, namely, to proceed with Hunia’s block and the other reserves on the Rangitikei River, all of which can be tied to the trig. survey on the opposite side [of the river], so as to ensure accuracy. I instructed Mr. Mitchell accordingly. His party will commence on Hunia’s reserve at once, while Stewart will continue the survey of Awahou reserve. I think no greater mistake could be made than to remove the surveyors from the block. A report has come in that all opposition is to be withdrawn; I only hope it is true.” Again, on the 10th January, Mr. Buller telegraphed, —“Noa Te Rauhihi reports positively that all opposition to the survey is withdrawn. I infer from this that the reply from the King” [who thus seems to have been appealed to by the Natives for orders] “is in our favour. Any isolated attempts at obstruction ought now to be put down with a firm hand.” Mr. Buller directed the surveyors that “if any determined opposition were offered, or such resistance as might lead to actual collision, they were to suspend operations.”

The Government had not long to wait. In the same early days of January, the Natives destroyed the major trig. station at Mount Stewart. Nor were there wanting other signs that mischief was brewing. On the 10th January, Mr. Ormond received information at Napier which induced him to advise that the question of the survey should not be pushed; and that if it were deferred for a time, Mr. McLean might effect a settlement with the dissentients. The Government adopted his suggestion, decided on postponing the question till Mr. McLean came, and wrote to Mr. McLean strongly urging him to come soon and try to settle the difficulty.

Towards the end of January the opposition seemed to have lulled, and the survey was going on without further molestation. On the 1st February, Mr. Buller again told the Government that “all opposition on the part of the Natives was for the present at an end.” But he added that it “would take very little to renew it in certain quarters;” and that he was “strongly of opinion that no further attempt should be made to survey the Oroua award till all the other reserves were finished,” for “any apparent anxiety to hurry it would tend to provoke the hostility which was now latent, and might place us just where we were two months ago.” There had been some apparent difference of opinion as to who was to be responsible for the survey; and Mr. Fox minuted, on the 3rd February, that “either Mr. Buller must be allowed to have the control, or the General Government must withdraw altogether from interfering in the matter. Divided responsibility can only end, as it always does, in conflict and confusion. Of course I mean so far as the survey of the Native reserves and trigonometrical [work are concerned]. When these are done, the Provincial Government will be able to do the rest without difficulty.” The Provincial Government thereupon said they were “equally desirous that Mr. Buller should exercise a general control over the survey operations;” and that “the men engaged on the survey had strict instructions to obey any orders received from Mr. Buller;” working details being still left to the professional head of the department, who was a provincial officer.

Things apparently went on quietly during February and March; but on the 1st of April, the surveyors having again shifted their camp to a place near Te Reureu Pa, and commenced the survey there by driving in two pegs, these pegs were immediately pulled up by Hapa and Akewa, who ordered the surveyors off the ground. On the 4th April, a meeting took place between the officer who was interpreter to the Bench at Marton, and about forty natives. Eruini Te Tau, on their behalf, gave their reasons for obstructing the survey; and announced that “he had brought his dray down to cart over the surveyors’ things and tents to the other side of the river,” and that they must not return till there had been another sitting of the Court. The interpreter replied, that the case “was finally settled; that there would not be another hearing; that the land was no longer theirs, and now belonged to the Government; that the Native title had been extinguished, as published in the Native *Gazette*; and that if they removed the tents, it would be at their peril, and he would take the names of any who dared attempt it.” Noa Te Rauhihi advised the Natives to be very careful of what they did, and strongly recommended them not to stop the survey. Eruini then said that “he would come again every morning with his dray to remove the camp, and if the surveyors would not leave he would go home; he