

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE MEETING OF UREWERA TRIBES,

HELD AT RUATAHUNA, 23RD AND 24TH MARCH, 1874.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

REPORT by H. W. BRABANT, Esq., R.M., Opotiki.

SIR,—

Opotiki, 1st April, 1874.

I have the honor to inform you that I have just returned from Ruatahuna, where I proceeded to attend the Urewera meeting, in accordance with your instructions contained in your letter No. 398-2, of the 4th October last.

There has been considerable uncertainty as to the date when this meeting would take place, the Urewera themselves disagreeing on this point. It was first fixed for February, afterwards put off until the 4th of March, and then again to March the 17th. As it appeared pretty certain, from letters I had received, and from statements of Tamaikowha and others who had come down to ask me to attend, that the meeting would actually come off on this date, I started on March the 9th, so as to allow for delays on the road, which were likely, on account of the weather being bad. The following is a report of my journey, and of the proceedings at the meeting. The Urewera had invited all the Bay of Plenty tribes, as far down as Cape Runaway, to attend their *hui*, but none of them accepted the invitation with the exception of a few chiefs who accompanied me, and who most of them went at my request. I stayed on the 9th at Whakatane, employed in getting my party together, and on the 10th proceeded as far as Pukiekie, at the entrance of the Whakatane Gorge, with the following party:—Wiremu Kingi, and two others of the Ngaitai; Hoani Ngamu, Taupo Te Hura, and two others of the Arawa; Wepiha Apanui, and three others of the Ngatiawa; Kaperiere, and three others of the Ngatipukeko; Piahana Tiwai, of the Whakatohea; Kepa Te Ahuru, and four others of the Urewera; and two native police; making in all a party of twenty-two. Pukiekie is settled by Te Turi and five other men, with their women and children, who hospitably entertained my Native fellow-travellers.

On the following day (11th) we started up the gorge, though it was pouring with rain, and in about three hours reached Te Ahikaiata's settlement of Ngamahanga. We were here met by a messenger who had been sent to Te Ahikaiata, the Secretary of the *Whitu Tekau* (seventy), with a letter which had reached Ruatahuna from Tareha Te Moananui. This letter, which was shown me, requested the Urewera to put off their meeting until the end of the month, as, if they did not, neither Mr. Locke, R.M., nor the Ngatikahungunu would attend it. I decided to wait at Ngamahanga until I heard further news, although Te Ahikaiata urged me to pay no attention to the letter. I therefore despatched one of the Urewera orderlies who was with my party, with a letter to the chiefs at Ruatahuna, asking them to let me know whether I should go on or go back, as, if I went on at once, I should not be able to wait at Ruatahuna until the end of the month; whereas, if the meeting had been put off, I should be able to return home and make a fresh start.

On the 12th, the rain continuing, the river commenced to rise, and continued to do so for two days. On the evening of the 15th I received an answer to my letter from Kereru and Te Whenuanui, urging me to go on at once. This was brought down by a messenger who came on foot over some mountain pass, and, according to his own account, nearly lost his life in swimming the river. On the evening of the 16th the river appeared to have fallen sufficiently to attempt the journey, and before daylight on the 17th we started up the river, and notwithstanding that the water was still high, and some of the fords very deep, we reached Tauwharematai, the first inland settlement, at dusk. We were here hospitably entertained by Aperahama and the Natives of the place, and received with the usual speeches, songs, &c. A letter was handed to me from Kereru, asking me to remain one day where I was, and to go on to Ruatahuna on the morning of the 19th. Accordingly, on that day I proceeded to Ruatahuna, about eight miles.

further. I found there, on a flat of some six acres in extent, nearly the whole of the Urewera tribe assembled, with the exception of Te Makarini and those residing at Waikaremoana. The large house which formerly stood at Te Tahora had been removed here, and a road had been formed for a few chains for the visitors to march to the settlement. The greater number of the Natives assembled were living in tents formed of sheets, shawls, &c., in the usual Native manner. Two flags were flying in front of the large house; one a red ensign, and the other showing the bust of a black man on a red ground, which was intended for the flag of the *Whitu Tekau* (seventy). When we had alighted from our horses, we were received by a war dance of about 100 men, armed with taiahas, meres, &c., and having reached the verandah of the large house, the speeches of welcome were commenced. The following spoke on the side of the Urewera:—Wata, Tamaiapuri, Tawhara, Te Wiremu, Tamana, Tipihau, Atama, Tutekangahau, Tamihana, Ngapoti (of Ngaiterangi), Te Whenuanui, Raniera, Kereru Te Pukenui, Te Haunui, Hira Tauaki, Ahipene (Ngatikahungunu). After which, Wiremu Kingi, Kaperiere, Wepiha Apanui, and Piahana Tiwai made speeches in reply. I then addressed them. I said I regretted that the meeting had been put off so often, as it had kept away both Natives and Europeans from the Bay of Plenty, who had at first purposed to attend. That I had come in accordance with instructions from the Government, and had arrived on the day fixed by themselves. That the party who had accompanied me was small; but that the absence of roads, and the nature of the country, made the travelling to Ruatahuna a serious undertaking to Natives as well as Europeans, more especially in the bad weather which had been prevalent. I then retired to a tent which Te Whenuanui had erected for me and Captain Swindley, who had come up to attend the meeting on private business of his own connected with leasing land.

Early on the following morning I was visited by Paerau, Te Whenuanui, and Kereru, who wished me to wait a few days to see if Mr. Locke, R.M., and Ngatikahungunu would attend. I replied that I had received no notice from Government that Mr. Locke would attend, but that, in deference to their wishes, I would wait until Monday, the 23rd instant, but as I had other duties to perform, I could not remain much longer. It was then settled that I should start on my return not later than the 25th March.

I ascertained from conversations with various chiefs that they expected Mr. Locke would remove the confiscated line on the Bay of Plenty side, the several chiefs of Urewera who had lately visited Napier having promulgated this idea.

On the 20th and 21st of March I employed myself in conversation with the several chiefs. On the 23rd, the business of the meeting was opened by Te Ahikaiata (the Secretary to the *Whitu Tekau*), who gave out as the subjects for discussion,—

1. The confiscated boundary.
2. The *Waka Matatua* to be united (*i.e.*, that all the tribes who are said to have come over in this canoe should join in a sort of land league).
3. *Te Whitu Tekau*.
4. The forbidding of roads, leasing lands, magistrates, and other “bad things.”

After some hours had been spent in discussion, the food for the visitors was presented, consisting of a canoe (*Matatua*), forty feet long, half filled with preserved birds and a quantity of potatoes.

I was then asked by Paerau and Kereru to accompany them to another part of the ground to receive the food set apart for the Government. Taking Wiremu Kingi with me, I went with them, and Paerau then presented to me, on behalf of the Government, ten large *tahas* (calabashes)—some of them carved and ornamented—said to contain about 1,800 preserved birds. He said the Urewera presented them to the Hon. Mr. McLean, Captain Porter, and Mr. Brabant. Atama and Kereru then spoke, the latter saying that he was blamed by his tribe for taking money from Government: that the *tahas* were for his fault.

Hira Tauaki (one of the principal men of the *Whitu Tekau*) then spoke at some length. He said the Urewera had had many things from Government: they had received food and clothing after their surrender; they had also taken rations when they visited Napier, Opotiki, and other places; and worst of all, Kereru had taken money from Government. That they begged the Government to accept these *tahas* (calabashes) as payment for the rations and for the money which had been given to Kereru. That they feared the Government intended at some future time to exact land in payment. That the *tahas* were a small thing, but the Urewera were not rich; and that although individuals took rations from Government, the tribe wished the system to be stopped, as they thought that ultimately they would be called upon to pay for them in land.

I then addressed them. I said I would accept the *tahas*, not as payment for rations or for anything else, but as a mark of the friendship of the Urewera towards the Government. (This remark was received with cheers.) I then entered into a full explanation of what I conceived to be the intentions of Government in giving Natives rations, presents, &c.

I explained that Government collected money from both Europeans and Natives by Customs duties and other taxes; that it then became their duty to distribute this money all over the country, and to provide public officers, to pay them out of this money, and to carry on public works, such as roads, bridges, &c. That the Government had considered that although the Urewera and some other Native tribes declined to have public officers appointed within their boundaries, or to have roads and other public improvements gone on with, that they were nevertheless entitled to some share of the revenue until they were sufficiently advanced in civilization to appreciate our system of government and of public works, as they would doubtless do in

course of time. That any rations or presents the Urewera had received were from the general revenue of the colony, and that the Government would never claim land on account of them. I concluded by saying that I should leave the *tahas* at Ruatahuna until I had communicated with Mr. McLean on the subject.

On the following day the speaking was brought to a close. I attach hereto my notes which I took at the time, and take leave to make the following few remarks on the meeting and the feelings of the Urewera generally.

The speeches were all moderate in tone, and the tribe appear to be earnest in their desire to maintain friendly relations with the Government. At the same time, there is considerable distrust of the intentions of the Government towards them. They appear almost unanimous in their wish to keep roads, Magistrates, and other Government measures out of their boundary.

On other matters, such as renting land, and the question as to whether they shall ask Government to give them lots within the confiscated boundary, they are much divided; any meeting which the "Seventy" have on these questions always ending in disputes and confusion. In regard to this *Whitu Tekau*, it appears to me practically to differ but little from the runanga of any other Native tribe. The distinction that the *Whitu Tekau* was supposed to exclude the chiefs is really inoperative.

With regard to the confiscated line, the Urewera generally are in favour of acknowledging it, and petitioning Government to give them small lots within it,—Tamaikowha and Hira Tauaki being conspicuous as supporting this view; while a few, at the head of whom is Kereru, have imbibed, at Napier, Henare Koura's ideas, and wish other tribes to join them in engaging a lawyer to take the question of the confiscated lands before the Court of Chancery in England. The name of an Auckland solicitor I heard mentioned as being prepared to do this for them. While I told them that, in my opinion, they would waste money by such a course, I also assured them that an appeal to the Courts of law was a legitimate one.

The "Seventy" had matured a scheme, which they hoped would come to a head at their *hui*, to get all the tribes to join them in a sort of land league, to forbid the sale and leasing of lands, roads, &c.; but they appear to have nearly abandoned it as impracticable, as not only the tribes outside refuse to join them, but they cannot even agree about it among themselves. Rakuraku, Wepiha, Apanui, Paora, Kingi, and others are anxious to lease some of the Urewera lands. I think they are gradually gaining adherents among the *Whitu Tekau*, and I am inclined to believe that they will eventually succeed. The Urewera (like the Waikato) appear to be inordinately fond of rum, and some of them openly attribute their desire to lease land, to their thirst after ardent spirits. Of course, it can hardly be expected but that Europeans wishing to deal with them should take full advantage of this weakness.

I think the Urewera being so divided among themselves on the different questions, occasioned them to put off the *hui* from time to time, and that very probably it was a stroke of policy on their part to try to get Mr. Locke and myself to attend at different times, in order that they might compare our statements as to the confiscated line and the Government policy generally.

I observe the Urewera still use the religious ceremonies known as "Te Kooti's *Karakia*." It consists of singing selections from the Psalms, and saying prayers culled from prayer books. Taumata, of Maungapowhatu, held this service twice every day while I was at Ruatahuna.

I left on the afternoon of the 24th March, and managed, by having relays of horses, myself to reach Opotiki late on the evening of the 26th. A messenger came, I am told, after us, to say that Mr. Locke and the Ngatikahungunu were on their way up. I believe Rakuraku, Tamaikowha, and some other Natives returned in consequence.

I am greatly indebted to the friendly chiefs who accompanied me, especially to Wiremu Kingi, of the Ngaitai, for their doing so, and for the manner in which they represented the Government policy and matters generally to the Urewera.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT,
Resident Magistrate.

NOTES OF SPEECHES made at the NATIVE MEETING at RUATAHUNA.

March 23rd and 24th, 1874.

Te Ahikaiata: The subjects for discussion are—1. The confiscated boundary. 2. The union of Matatua. 3. The *Whitu Tekau*. 4. The forbidding of roads, leases, Magistrates, and other bad things (*mea kino*). The people who should be here to-day are not all here. Mr. Locke should be here, and Tareha. They have heard our discussion before about the line. Mr. Locke moved the line on the other side. He called this meeting. The object was to move (*hiki*) the line. We called the meeting for the 17th; everybody heard that. Then Tareha writes to put it off, that he and Mr. Locke may come. We consent to that. But if the Government told Tareha to get it put off, why did they not tell Mr. Brabant? What can we do? Mr. Brabant and Wiremu Kingi will not wait. If they urge on the meeting, we give in. They are agents of the Government.

Mr. Brabant explains that he is instructed to attend this meeting by Government. That he had come up on the day named by the Urewera. That he could not wait an indefinite time.

That after all there is no certainty that Mr. Locke is coming. If he were here would he not have written himself to say so? Even if Mr. Brabant were to consent to wait, his Native companions would not. They are thinking of their kumeras and other work at their homes.

Wiremu Kingi states that, in his opinion, if the Urewera had adhered to February as the date for their meeting, all would go well. As to Mr. Locke, he had no power to move the line. The Government had given Mr. Brabant what they had to say on that matter. Perhaps Mr. Locke may come up after we have gone. If he does, his statements will not differ.

Te Ahikaiaata: These are my boundaries—Pukenuiora, Ohirau Tokitoki, Motuotu, Toretore, then to Putauaki. [These places are all in confiscated land. The first and last named are on the line.] That is my *papa tipu*. The Government say it is theirs.

Paerau asks that the confiscated line may be moved back.

Tutekanahau: Let it be agreed that it shall be moved; afterwards it can be settled where the new boundary shall run.

Kereru: The land was taken by Government. They said it was a permanent boundary; but the line has been moved at Turanga and at Waikare. Mr. Locke said the boundary would be moved; then the map was torn in his office, and it was done.

Mr. Brabant: The line will not be moved. I told *Paerau* so at Whakatane the other day. Since then, I have had a telegram from Government to the same effect—that is a *kupu tuturu*—it will not be moved one foot. Ask my friends who came with me: they have acquired land on my side of the line. Some of them bought it; to some of them it was given, because they remained loyal; to others it has been given because they wanted land to plant. This land has been assured them by Government. Some of you may perhaps acquire land as they have done, but the line will never be moved.

Paerau: You have spoken your word, now I turn to the Natives. Let Matatua be one.

Kereru: Let Matatua be one, and let us join our lands to keep out rents and roads. Give me the land, not for myself, but to look after.

Hoani Ngamu (Arawa): Speak on the line—that it cannot be moved, &c.

Piahana Tiwai says if the Urewera were under the law he would willingly join them; but he doubted their intentions. As to joining the land, the Whakatohea were willing to join their land to the Ureweras, to keep out leases, roads, &c. That *Te Awanui* had consented to that when *Tamaikowha* went down to Opape. [*Te Awanui* denies this.]

Tamaikowha: I made the peace which causes all the island to be at peace now. I made my boundary (the Urewera boundary, made by themselves in 1872). It is not all mine; it belongs to several tribes, but it is for me to look after it. The *Whitu Tekau* were appointed to look after it. I never promised to acknowledge the confiscated line. I said to Mr. McLean and Major Mair that I would not do so. However, I have acknowledged it, as I am living here within it. Also, I made a road for Government, but I said let it stop at the line. Mr. Brabant consented to that. In this way we agreed to that line. As to what is said about the *ture* (law), I am willing that the *ture* should look into it. (H. Kouras' scheme.) But if Government offer me a piece of land in the confiscated block I shall take it.

Ngawaka (of Patuhehenu) speaks about his lease (to Mr. Troutbeck). He will not allow the *Whitu Tekau* to interfere with it.

Wiremu Kingi (Ngaitai) shows that the confiscated block did not belong to the Urewera.

Tamaikowha: I resign my claim to the confiscated land. I don't acknowledge what *Wi Kingi* says to be correct. It did belong to me. The *Whitu Tekau* didn't give it up. Our chiefs lost it. The chiefs now say that Mr. Locke and the *ture* will return it to us. If it is returned, it is well, but we shall not insist on it.

Wi Patene: I am satisfied with the confiscated boundary. I have taken the Government money. It was for land (from Messrs. Davis and Mitchell). Now the "Seventy" wish the lease given up to them. It is a question if they are strong enough to undertake it.

Paerau: I wanted to stop the road at *Te Karamuramu*. *Tarawera* is mine. (Shouts of "Stop!" from the Urewera, who would not listen to him.)

March 24th.

Hetaraka Te Wakaunua asks *Kaperiere* to give over to the "Seventy" the *Ngatipukeko* lands.

Kaperiere: Our lands were confiscated. The Government have returned us some. We prefer the Government to the *Whitu Tekau* as guardians for our land.

Wepiha Apanui: I compare these lands to fish. The confiscated land is cooked fish; the Native land is raw fish. Your stomachs cannot stand either, in my opinion. You may be able to eat one of them, but I think you cannot. The Government cannot give back the confiscated land, because of the *kuira* (the lots which have been disposed of). If you excepted the *kuira*, then possibly the Government might consent to move (*hiki*) the line.

Kereru: I can deal with the cooked fish, give me over the raw. Give us over *Ohope* and the rest of the *papa tipu*, which has been given back to you; that is still raw if it is in your hands.

Hemi Kakitu: I have land in the confiscated boundary, some of which the Government gave me and some I bought. I shall take charge of those lands myself.

Kereru: I adhere to my boundary. I and the *ture* will be strong enough to move the line. I shall carry it to Auckland, to Wellington, and even to the other side of the water. I

shall be right because the law is on my side. The Government stole the land. They have made restitution at Turanga. The Government said they took the land for our fault: we never committed any fault.

Wiremu Kingi explains the Turanga land question,—how the Court sat on it, and the “deed of cession.” He also shows how the Urewera had joined in all the disturbances, and ought to have their land taken.

Ngapoti (of Ngaiterangi) makes a rather violent speech against Government, giving his ideas of all the wars from that at the Bay of Islands to the present time.

Hira Tauaki (one of the “Seventy,” a sensible, moderate man, and a chief of influence): It is clear to every one that we are divided. As Tuhoe cannot agree, I cannot ask others to join us. What I say to the chiefs of Tuhoe is this, “*tiakina tou arero*” (guard your tongues). The chiefs (Kereru) have had their say. We (the “Seventy”) have one thing to say to you, Mr. Brabant. Give us a piece of land for the *kohuru* at Whakarae.

Mr. Brabant: I have listened to all that has been said. I do not see any use in discussing whether the Government were right in confiscating the land, as it is a matter settled long ago. You all know that what Wiremu Kingi said is true—that you owe it to the clemency of Government that the spot on which we stand was not confiscated too. As to what has been said about appealing to the law, and carrying the case to England, that course is open to you; but if you fail, you would have to pay expenses, which would be very heavy, and I myself believe you would fail. As to your asking Ngatipukeko and Ngatiawa to give over their *kuiras* to you to take care of, the Government would not allow that. Their land, however, which they hold by Native custom, is different; that lays with them. As you have seen, however, they will not consent. You refuse what things the Government have to give, and what other tribes covet, such as Magistrates, roads, &c.; however, you may change your minds. As to what Tamaikowha has said of some of you wishing to accept allotments within the boundary, that is for the Government to consider. Government are not stingy with their lands as you are; if they see any one, either European or Native, who wants their land for actual settlement, they, as a rule, give it him. As to Te Hira’s request, I have heard something of it before, but I should like to hear further particulars, in order that I may report to the Government.

Tamaikowha: Colonel St. John attacked me after peace had been made. My relation was killed. Major Mair said Whakarae should be given as payment for that *kohuru*. Afterwards he said this piece had been given to Hemi Kakitu, but that he would look out for another. Wepiha and Hoani Ngamu heard this. Afterwards I went to Tauranga to see Mr. Clarke, Civil Commissioner. He said it was a *tino kohuru*, and promised land, as they had given me food and afterwards attacked me. I say let this land be given at once.

Mr. Brabant: It is not for me to remark on your claim. It has been decided, you say, by Mr. Clarke. If he promised that the land should be given, there is no doubt but that it will be. I will ask the Government to carry out their promise at once.

The meeting then broke up.

Note.—Meetings of the “Seventy” were held every day while I was at Ruatahuna. I was not asked to attend; but I believe they came to no conclusion, the “Seventy” being unable to agree among themselves. Hoani Ngamu attended some of the meetings, and reported the proceedings to me.

April 2nd, 1874.

HERBERT W. BRABANT,
Resident Magistrate.

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