

(3.) *State of Native Feeling.*

As regards the state of feeling existing between the Maoris and their pakeha neighbours in this district, on the whole nothing could be more satisfactory. I regret, however, to state that between Ngatitamatera and Ngatirahiri—the former being one of the leading tribes of Hauraki, and the latter a sub-tribe of Ngatimaru—there has been a difficulty about the Aroha Block, which, at one time, appeared to threaten the peace of the district. The danger, however, if any really existed, has been averted. The difficulty arose out of the sale of the Aroha Block to the Government, which block had been finally adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court at Auckland in 1871, and awarded to the descendants of Marutuahu, from which common ancestor most of the Hauraki Natives have sprung. Ngatirahiri now, however, after accepting certain payments on account of their interests, pretend to claim through Te Ruinga, and say Marutuahu was not entitled, nor his descendants either, except in so far as Te Ruinga's descendants choose to recognize them. But, prior to the promulgation of this new theory, the other different tribes and hapus, whose descent could in any way be traced to Marutuahu, had parted with their interests to the Crown, and Ngatirahiri now intend by all means to resist the sale of this block, and challenge the other tribes to come forward and point out the boundaries of what they claim. About the middle of January last some Natives from Ohinemuri were proceeding to Cambridge by way of Te Aroha. They were stopped by certain persons of the Ngatirahiri hapu, who threatened they would shoot them if they did not turn back. This action on their part was speedily followed by the Ohinemuri people closing the navigation of the river Waihou (as regarded Ngatirahiri only) by placing a boom across the river immediately below the confluence of the Waihou and Ohinemuri rivers, and for a time things looked threatening, both tribes looking upon each other with enmity and mistrust. The Ngatirahiri, having discovered that the navigation of the river had been stopped and pas erected by the Ngatitamatera, also built a pa for themselves at Te Aroha, and it appeared very likely that a serious rupture was about to take place, especially as Ngatirahiri were continually making use of offensive expressions towards Ngatitamatera, and acts of aggression on their part were frequent. But Ngatitamatera, evidently not wishing to cause trouble in Hauraki, and guided by the counsels of their chiefs Te Moananui and Te Hira, expressed a wish that the matter should be brought to a conclusion, and an expedition consisting of myself and several influential Hauraki chiefs proceeded to Te Aroha to endeavour to make peace. We, however, found Ngatirahiri very obdurate. The Ngatitamatera had removed the booms before we went to Te Aroha, and on our return they formally withdrew out of the quarrel by demolishing the pas, and since that time all fear of a rupture has ceased, as Ngatitamatera are determined not to enter into a quarrel with Ngatirahiri.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
E. W. PUCKEY,
Native Agent.

No. 7.

Major MAIR, R.M., Alexandra, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Alexandra, Waikato, 25th May, 1877.

In compliance with your circular, I have the honor to report upon Native affairs in this district.

During the past twelve months there has been a total absence of the political gatherings for which the Hau-Hau party had become so notorious: not that these meetings were unproductive of good, for even when called in an unfriendly spirit to Europeans, they acted as a sort of safety-valve, and each "village Hampden" having aired his eloquence, and, more important still, all the food in the neighbourhood being consumed or wasted, the people dispersed, satisfied that things would "remain as they were for the present." But now the necessity for these *huis* does not apparently exist, the Native mind being less unsettled, and it being generally understood that the "Native difficulty," or as much of it as now exists, would be arranged "some day by Tawhiao and the Government." In the meantime, the bulk of the people, tolerably content with the actual state of things, are becoming more industrious, and yearly bring larger quantities of produce to the nearest markets. With this end in view, a steady exodus is going on from the more remote settlements to Kopua, Hikurangi, the valley of the Puniu, Maungatautari, and other places near the frontier, as being more convenient for grain-growing. Unfortunately serious damage has been done to the wheat crop during the last two seasons by floods, but the yield has increased largely nevertheless, and trade, when the state of the rivers permits canoe navigation, is quite brisk. The demand which has sprung up for an edible fungus, valued by the Chinese, furnishes light work for the young, and the infirm also, for the article in question is gathered in the woods with very little trouble, and after drying in the sun is ready for market.

Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto are becoming more estranged: indeed, when it is remembered that the former have for the last thirteen years been occupying land belonging to the other tribe, it is not to be wondered at. Maniapoto are afraid that Waikato, if permitted to continue their occupation, will eventually bring forward claims to the land, and they would gladly be relieved of their presence.

The new form of worship, called "tariao," is, I think, on the wane; very few of the young