

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

ARREST AND RELEASE OF CERTAIN WAIKATO MAORIS AT WAITARA

(REPORT FROM SUB-INSPECTOR KENNY, ARMED CONSTABULARY FORCE, RELATIVE TO).

(Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, with the leave of the House.)

No. 1.

Sub-Inspector KENNY to the SUPERINTENDENT of POLICE, North Island.

SIR,—

District Police Office, New Plymouth, 16th July, 1878.

I have the honor to report the occurrence of a disturbance at the Waitara Hotel, Waitara, between some Natives supposed to belong to the Mokau District, and the police, assisted by Europeans. On the evening of Saturday, the 13th instant, about a dozen or more Maoris were in the hotel, and a few Europeans, amongst whom was a drunken man named George Rundle. Rundle had a disagreement with the Maoris, one of whom he wanted to fight. After some altercation the landlord induced them to put on their coats and keep quiet; but, as the Maoris seemed noisy and quarrelsome, he sent for Constable Tapp, to help him to clear the house for fear of any further trouble.

Constable Tapp came in, and, on the request of landlord (time being about half-past 9 p.m.), cleared the bar. All the Maoris went quietly except one man and another held by him. On their refusing to go they were pushed out, not offering any active resistance. This Maori then tried to burst open bar door, which had been bolted behind him. Constable went out quickly, and told him to go away, pushing him from door. This brought on disturbance, for the other Maoris immediately rushed upon constable, who, being overcome by numbers, called on bystanders to his assistance. Two or three came, but, being speedily overpowered by numbers, Constable Tapp took out his hand-cuffs, passed his right hand through rings, and struck out with them on. This made the Maoris give back a little, when he, with assistance of two others, secured ringleader and took him off to watch-house. Fresh assistance arriving, prisoner was locked up; and two other Maoris, who had taken active part in the affray, and were looking into watch-house, were also secured. The Maoris then dispersed, declaring their intention to return and rescue prisoners by destroying lock-up, after getting a reinforcement from their village at the mouth of the Waitara River.

Constable Tapp, on ascertaining this, reported the circumstance to Mr. Thomas Bayley, J.P., the only Magistrate in the neighbourhood, and with his advice and consent let the prisoners out, as he had strong reasons to suspect that the Maoris would carry out their threat, and cause a serious riot. No further disturbance took place. After careful inquiries, I am of opinion that, had the Maoris succeeded in overpowering the Europeans at first, serious personal injury would have been suffered, for the Maoris, after the first rush, called out to throw the constable into the river, and to fetch timber from a heap stacked close by. I was informed of this by some person who understood Maori. No Maoris belonging to this neighbourhood, as far as I can ascertain, were concerned in the matter.

Mr. Perry, the landlord of the hotel, states that Te Wetere came to him next day, and said that the Maoris were in the wrong, but that he blamed Mr. Perry for doing constables' duty when it was not his business, and the constable for not inquiring into the quarrel with Rundle before turning the Maoris out of the house.

I would wish, Sir, to add in conclusion that Constable Tapp justifies his use of handcuffs as above stated by stating that he believed and still believes that it was a struggle for self-preservation. Mr. Perry and Mr. Nelson, who assisted from the first, state that but for Tapp's action it might have gone hard with them.

I have, &c.,

NEPEAN KENNY,

Sub-Inspector in charge Police District

The Superintendent of Police, North Island, Wellington.