

1878.
NEW ZEALAND.

COMMENCEMENT OF SURVEY OF WAIMATE PLAINS

(REPORT FROM MAJOR BROWN, CIVIL COMMISSIONER, TARANAKI, ON).

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

Major BROWN, Civil Commissioner, Taranaki, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Hawera, 10th August, 1878.

I have the honor to report the successful commencement and prosecution of the survey of the Waimate Plains, with every prospect of its peaceful continuance and completion.

Monday, the 29th July, was the earliest date that the arrangements necessary would enable me to fix for the commencement of the survey. In the previous week I caused this to be notified at the various villages on the Plains, and the notices of the Hon. J. Sheehan to be distributed and posted on all the bridges from the Waingongoro to the Otakehu, that I had found so effective at the Momahaki survey, in deterring the Natives from meddling with the survey marks and trig. stations. In this work I found the services of Katene Tuwakaruru (on pay as one of the Native police) invaluable. He did the work fearlessly and thoroughly, and I doubt if it would have been safe for any other of the Native police to attempt it. On the Saturday (27th) previous, Katene went to tell them when the survey would commence, and distributed notices again; and when they tore up the notices given them, he took out a notice and read it to them, so that no one should plead ignorance of the notices of the Hon. J. Sheehan, or of my intention to take the survey on to the Plains on the Monday following. On this last occasion he was accompanied by Mr. W. Williams, licensed interpreter, whose advice the Natives have a great regard for, more especially as he is not a Government officer. They failed to see Titokowaru at his place, Okaiawa. He kept out of the way, and probably will continue to do so for some time. His people are displeased with him for not agreeing to the proposition of the Hon. J. Sheehan that he should meet the Natives on the Plains, and they also suspect him of having taken Government money. This last supposition accounts to them for his vacillation, and also causes them to distrust him.

The Natives on the Plains had been disturbed by statements of Warerata, acting under European influence, that the survey would be supported by a strong armed force. This impression was removed by Katene, who assured them that the Government saw no reason for the law being carried out otherwise than peacefully.

At noon on Monday, 29th ultimo, I reached Rangitoto, on the Plains, about a mile the other side of Waingongoro, accompanied by Captain P. Wilson, Mr. Williams, Katene, and Kaitana, the two latter both Native police and principal owners of the land I was on. Te Ika and his party, about thirty, followed us here, and he made his protest against the survey going on. I stated about a week previous in a telegram from New Plymouth that Te Ika was to oppose the survey; but it hardly deserved the name of opposition, his protest being so mild and peaceably expressed that it might almost be said that we agreed to differ. He desired me to go back, and I told him that I must obey the orders of the Hon. J. Sheehan, and carry on the survey, and that he had better petition Parliament about any grievance he had, as the Momahaki Natives were doing. This he declined to do, evidently his objection being that he could not acknowledge Parliament without denying the prophet Te Whiti. The discussion, good-tempered and mostly repetition, lasted about an hour; and I complimented him on his peaceable form of protest. Te Ika blamed Titokowaru for not agreeing to the meeting on the Plains proposed by the Hon. the Native Minister; said there would be no recourse to arms, as was formerly the case, that being now at an end; and ended by asking that the pigs running on the land might be spared, which I promised. He then left with his companions, none of whom took part in the discussion.

Some of the surveyors and a few Hawera settlers came up before the interview was concluded, and the latter informed me after the Natives had left why the survey men had not arrived on the ground. Other information has since confirmed it. An alarm, commencing at Normanby, had extended to Hawera, that the Natives were going to fire on the survey party, and this deterred the men from crossing the Waingongoro River. I sent Captain Wilson to tell them that the interview was over, and that the Natives had retired, which had the effect of reassuring and sending the men forward, when the camp was formed about a hundred yards from Woodall's Redoubt. Owing to the tempestuous state of the weather, the surveys have not progressed as much as might have been wished, but sufficiently to require a portion of the camp to be shifted beyond the Kapuni Stream, which was done the day before yesterday.

The fear of some of the settlers at Normanby led one of them to ask Major Tuke if he would issue arms and ammunition to them, which he declined. There have been reports also that the Natives were