

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE DISTURBANCE AT OHINEMURI

(REPORTS BY MR. E. W. PUCKEY, NATIVE AGENT, THAMES, RELATIVE TO).

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

No. 1.

MR. E. W. PUCKEY to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 17th September, 1879.

I have the honor to make the following report on the late outrage at Ohinemuri, and the circumstances surrounding the same:—

In the beginning of March last certain members of the Ngatikoi hapu resident at Ohinemuri came to the Thames and offered the Pukehange Block for sale to the Government. The Land Purchase Officers declined to make any payment unless they were assured that the rest of the owners concurred in the proposed sale. The Natives referred to then went back, returning in a few days to the Thames, accompanied by one or two more, with a note from the rest of the Ngatikoi hapu agreeing to the proposed sale, though objecting to the price. Upon receiving an assurance that there would be no difficulty about the matter, a deposit was paid, all arrangements being at the same time made for surveying the land and passing it through the Native Lands Court in the usual manner. The price agreed to was 5s. per acre, the cost of the survey being borne by the Government.

On the 2nd June Mr. Wilkinson accompanied me to Ohinemuri, where the question was again fully gone into and some other payments made. An application for the survey was in due course transmitted, bearing on it my recommendation, to Mr. P. Smith, the Chief Surveyor, who wrote, saying that, as most of the surrounding land had been surveyed, he thought it was hardly necessary to make a survey. It was thought, however, by the Land Purchase Officer that, as some surveys had been made of the lands immediately to the southward, there might be overlaps, and, consequently, disputes in reference thereto would arise, and that it would be fairer for all parties that a survey should be made in the ordinary way; and he suggested that Mr. Bayldon be authorized to do the work. Ample time for any objection had been allowed, as it was only in August that he made a commencement; and, while running the southern boundary, without any notice being given to himself or me that any objection existed as regarded the survey, his party was fired upon by certain members of the Ngatihako hapu, wounding one man named William Daldy McWilliams. I need hardly say that this is the first instance in which a resort to the use of fire-arms to protest against a survey has at any time been made in my district.

About 11 p.m. on the 29th August I was awakened by Mr. McIlhone coming to my house with the report that Mr. Bayldon's party had been fired upon. The news thoroughly took me by surprise. I arranged with Mr. McIlhone to proceed with him at daylight in the morning. At about 3 a.m. on the 30th Mr. Bayldon, who had in the meantime returned by steamer from Ohinemuri, informed me of the facts of the case, which I duly reported to the Hon. the Native Minister at the opening of the telegraph office at 8 a.m., mentioning at the same time that I would arrange for a party of Hauraki chiefs to meet him on his arrival from Auckland that afternoon, and confer with him on the course to be taken. Telegrams were then sent to leading chiefs in various parts of the district, informing them of the outrage.

The Hon. the Native Minister, having arrived, was accompanied by Mr. Wilkinson, Taipari, and myself, as representing the Native and Land Purchase Departments, to Ohinemuri, which place was reached about 10.30 p.m. same evening, when I at once made arrangements for a meeting of Natives, to take place early next morning. At about 10 o'clock, the chiefs and people of Ohinemuri having assembled in the Paeroa Hall, the Hon. the Native Minister addressed them as follows [extract, *Thames Advertiser*, 1st September]:—

“Mr. Sheehan interviewed the Ohinemuri Natives in the Public Hall at 10 o'clock. ‘He saluted them—people who belonged to the place polluted with blood. He came there on account of the bad act which had taken place. He did not call them together to hold a meeting, but to hear what he had to say. He had come to tell them about the survey of the block. He was very *pouri* on account of the thing. It was the first disturbance in Hauraki, and he hoped it would be the last. There were two things to discuss—the first was the survey, and the next the right of the Government to the land. He was prepared to take the people who had been shooting at the surveyors. He was going to their settlement to take them, if they were there. If they were gone he would do the next best thing—he