

and that they carefully observed that none of the Ngatikoi were on board the steam-launch, otherwise they would have been shot. I would now beg respectfully to submit that you take into consideration the proposal made you yesterday by Tukukino and the Hauraki chiefs, that the first step in this painful business be taken by the assembled chiefs. I believe that step will result in these fellows being brought to justice, as the Natives feel very strongly at this disturbance of the peace of this district, and as they are very anxious to assist us to the utmost in order to show their cordial feelings towards us. I think it would be wiser, as I am certain an attempt to arrest would result in bloodshed, and the loss of several lives, besides possible complications in which surrounding tribes might take part. By complying with the wish of the Hauraki people we shall enlist them on our side, and we shall have their sympathy in the event of our having to employ force to compel those who shelter those people to give them up.—E. W. PUCKEY, Native Agent, Thames."

On our landing at Shortland we learned that the Hon. Mr. Sheehan was waiting to see us at Grahamstown, whither we proceeded with all despatch accordingly. The Hon. Mr. Sheehan immediately sent Wata Tipa to the Hoe-a-Tainui, Upper Piako, by a steam-launch, to fetch Wini Kerei and other chiefs to act in unison with the runanga of Hauraki, in accordance with the wishes of Tukukino, Reihana te Tutaua, W. H. Taipari, and others, who desired to allow the surrender of the culprits and the inquiry as to the reasons of the shooting to be deputed to them.

I must now leave the history of the case for a while, and show what action had been taken by the Ngatihako. Early on Saturday morning, the 30th of August, a messenger was sent to the Hoe-a-Tainui from Okahukura, informing them of what had taken place, and soliciting assistance. Wini Kerei told me they had been arguing the matter for two days and two nights prior to the arrival of Wata Tipa. His advice to his people was to let the matter alone; which I am glad to say they followed. On Sunday, 31st, Tiwai, a Hauhau orator, and Natanahira te Rumanui, accompanied the messenger to Okahukura, and on Monday wrote me a letter, copy of which, with translation, is annexed (Enclosure No. 1). The receipt of this letter on the night of Monday, the 1st September, supported me in the opinion I entertained that the Ngatihako had been reinforced, which turned out not to be the case. Referring to the last census returns will show the Ngatihako people to consist of twenty-three men and seventeen women. There are, however, many amongst the Hauraki tribes who are more or less connected with them, and whose sympathy they could readily command were hasty action taken by us to seek *utu*. But, to resume the thread of my narrative, Tipa returned to the Thames on the night of 2nd September, accompanied by Pineaha te Wharekowhai, Mata Ngapo his wife, Rota Tamatea, and Hunui. I hurried off to see them at 6 a.m. on the 3rd, and had a few minutes' conversation with Pineaha, who appeared very much down-cast, believing he would undoubtedly be sent to gaol for the crimes which his people were guilty of. This impression had got so deep a hold of his mind that he could not readily get rid of it. At 9 a.m. I accompanied the Hon. Mr. Sheehan to Grahamstown, where we were followed by Tipa and Pineaha and party. An interview took place, at which the Hon. the Native Minister expressed the deep regret he felt at the peace of Hauraki having been thus rudely disturbed. We left for Ohinemuri that day at noon; and, having sent a messenger to the Komata asking Tukukino to come and see the Hon. the Native Minister, we awaited his arrival at Paeroa. Tukukino made his appearance at 6.30 p.m., when the Hon. Mr. Sheehan had an interview with him, at which Pineaha was present, as well as Wata Tipa, Hata Paka, and others. He was informed by the Hon. the Native Minister that, as he had so much wished it, he was willing to place the matter in the hands of the runanga of Hauraki, which had now assembled (there being representative men of all the tribes at this time at Paeroa), but that, if the runanga found that Pakara and Epiha were justified in a Maori point of view in shooting, he could not accept that as final. The duty of the runanga was to investigate two things—(1) The shooting, and who had done it; (2) as to the survey, whether there was any encroachment on the Ngatihako land. He intrusted the matter to them, believing they would do what was right, and that they would insure the surrender of the culprits to the law. He had already told them what the consequence would be if that was not done. Should they surrender, however, he would take the finding of the runanga, and the peace which had so long continued in Hauraki, into consideration, and deal as leniently with the offenders as possible. Tukukino expressed himself very much pleased at the course which the Hon. the Native Minister had taken; and the interview terminated, the Hon. the Native Minister returning the same evening to the Thames.

On the following morning, 4th September, a discharge of firearms was heard in the direction of Okahukura, which turned out to be consequent on the arrival of a party from Keripehi and Waitakaruru. At 10 a.m., the runanga, having assembled with the usual ceremony, proceeded to discuss the instructions given them by the Hon. Mr. Sheehan; and, in order to secure the presence of Ngatihako, Pineaha te Wharekowhai, his wife, Karatiana Kihau, Wata Tipa, Wini Kerei, and others, accompanied by Mr. G. Wilkinson, of the Native Land Purchase Department, were sent in steam launch to Okahukura, conveying to the Ngatihako the formal summons of the runanga. They promised to attend the meeting the following day, but would come armed and ready for any emergency.

On the 5th, at 9 a.m., the runanga assembled at a place called Opakura, about one mile below Paeroa. A considerable party of Natives from Ohinemuri went some distance on the way to Okahukura to meet the Ngatihako, who at length, after a series of delays, came in sight about 11.45 a.m. As they had to cross the river, still further delay took place, but at last they came, headed by their old chief Pineaha, who is a very good stamp of the old Maori gentleman, and one whose word is as good any day as his bond. There were about seventeen men armed with double-barrelled guns. When the party came within about two hundred yards of where the runanga was sitting, they each discharged one barrel of their guns, some of which were loaded with ball, which could distinctly be heard whizzing high in the air. According to an understanding come to, the greater part of the day was spent weeping over what might affect the future peace of Hauraki: it was not till late in the day that the runanga commenced to speak upon what had caused the meeting of the tribes.

On the 6th, Te Raika Whakarougotai, lieutenant of the Hauraki Native Volunteer Corps, was chosen chairman of the runanga, which immediately proceeded with the taking of evidence. This was continued on the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th.