

From the Mangawhero (Ohakune) my course lay through Waimarino, near the Hahungatahi, and the country was said to be flat, with but some twenty miles of bush to get through, but there was a Native track which led to Ruakaka, a Native village some twelve miles below Hahungatahi, on the Manganui-a-te-Ao. To save swagging I took the horses through this track to Ruakaka, intending to follow up the River Manganui-a-te-Ao to Waimarino, and cut back to Ohakune. On arriving at Ruakaka I was compelled to pitch my camp within the Native village, and found that the Native, Paora Patapu, whom Kemp had promised to send up before me, had not arrived, and the Natives received my letters from Kemp and Woon with suspicion, alleging, after three days' *korero*, that if Kemp desired their concurrence he should have sent word up to them before now: I had arrived among them without any notice, and they should take me back to Kemp. Accordingly I was marched back to Papatupu, some two miles above the confluence of the Manganui-a-te-Ao with the Wanganui, and there found about eighty Natives assembled. I was kept there another two or three days. The principal men present were: Taumata, Te Kuru Kaanga, Te Peehi, Winiata te Kakai, Manurewa, Turehu, Raukawa, Rangihuatau, Te Aurere, Huriwaka, Te Whaiti, Eniko, Kaiatua.

Rangihuatau spoke in a vacillating way, but said he was a Government man; Taumata was decidedly averse to the railway, and also to any Europeans coming on their land, and said if I had been taken on his land he should have cut up all my belongings in small pieces, and made slaves of myself and party; Te Kuru spoke against any violence, but was decidedly in favour of keeping Europeans away. All spoke, but Winiata and Te Aurere (who were at heart in favour of the railway) were afraid to speak out: and eventually letters were written to Kemp, and Mr. Woon, and myself, saying if I returned a second time I should be turned back, and any Maoris who were with me would be killed, and if I returned a third time I should be killed. Taumata would agree to nothing, and strongly advised keeping us prisoners here; but several others (including Te Aurere, Te Peehi, Te Kuru, Turehu, and Taurere) were more moderate, and said if I could bring letters from Wahanui or Tawhiao they would not obstruct me. Taumata then came over to me and asked if I understood their ultimatum, at the same time observing, "If you come again, remember you will go to the ground." Then he asked me what I thought of his letter to Mr. Woon. I replied I had not thought anything about it, but I should take care that a copy of it found its way to the Government, and they could think what they liked about it. After this seven chiefs were appointed to paddle us down to Wanganui. The following men were fixed on, so that they might have influence to talk to Major Kemp: Winiata te Kakai, Te Kuru Kaanga, Potatau, Te Aurere, Te Peehi, Iko, Patena. Going down the river we called at Pipiriki, Herurarema, Koriniti, Parikino, and Kaiwhaiki, at all of which places the usual speeches were made, and most of the lower-river Natives were in favour of the railway. We were two and a half days coming down. Some of the Native villages on the Wanganui River are thickly peopled; for instance, at Herurarema and Koriniti there are about 130 to 150 at each place. At Herurarema there is a Catholic mission, consisting of the Rev. Fathers Soulas and Marot, two nuns, and a lay sister, Maria Joseph, long known in Napier by the old residents: they very hospitably entertained me. There is a school here with sixty-four scholars, and average attendance fifty-nine. The Natives possess 2,500 sheep, horses, and cattle, besides ploughs, &c. At Ranana, the site of the celebrated fight at Moutoa, there is also a large flock of sheep, and a fine wharepuni, 83ft. by 37ft.: this is called Huriwhenua, and is the arena of the labours of Kemp's council.

On arrival at Upokongaro I secured the services of Mr. Woon, and a meeting took place between my captors and Major Kemp, the result of which I forwarded to you on the 22nd September. Te Kuru Kaanga firmly opposed my returning, saying they did not want the railway; and Winiata and Raukawa privately told me to wait, their tongues were tied now, but by-and-by they would speak.

I then returned to Wellington to seek the advice of the Native Minister, and, if possible, get letters from Wahanui and Tawhiao. During my stay in Wellington overtures were made by Kemp through Mr. R. Woon, which resulted in a more amicable understanding with the Government, and a meeting between the Hon. the Native Minister and Major Kemp: after which the latter renewed his promises of assistance, and advised my attendance at a large Native meeting at Ranana, and provided a canoe and men for my return. The meeting was largely attended, and included four or five chiefs of Manganui-a-te-Ao, who were convinced by Major Kemp of the advantages of railway communication, and agreed to my going on; but it was considered necessary to take a strong force. Accordingly, on the 27th September six canoes accompanied me with the following people: From Ranana—Paora Patapu, Rena (wife), Eruera te Ua, Te Wikirini, Te Nau, H. N. Walker; from Pipiriki—Kaiaoro, Maata (wife), Turawhi, Mahirini, Maehe, Kaawa (wife), Te Rua, Te Heuheu, Te Huia, Te Whaingā, Ramere (wife), Rehana, Te Hoeroa; from Herurarema—Tohiora, Reri; from Koriniti—Paori Kurimati, Teake; from Kaiwhaiki—Matiaka, Tutaua, Te Rou; from Kukuta—Hikaka, Wikitoria (wife); from Manganui-a-te-Ao—Te Peehi, Peata (wife).

The Wanganui River closes in at about seven miles up, and from thence to Ranana it is more or less gorgy, enclosed by hills some three or four hundred feet high. It is, however, possible to get a horse up to Koriniti along a sort of track at the foot of the river-cliffs, but no further, except inland; there are a few low flats, but not of any great extent. At Ranana there is a large clearing, perhaps a thousand acres, a good deal of which is in English grass. Between Koriniti and Manganui-a-te-Ao is almost a continuous gorge. Excepting at Ranana, Herurarema, and Pipiriki the cliffs frown above one almost perpendicularly, especially between Pipiriki and Manganui-a-te-Ao, and the river runs stilly; I am told that for a long distance above Manganui-a-te-Ao the river has the same gorgy character. I remarked no leading valleys coming from the east from Upokongaro to Manganui-a-te-Ao, but many of the side-hills have extensive flat terraces on top, and small creeks, and doubtless good roads could be graded out, more especially as the hills (mostly *papa*) are not of any great height.