

the commencement of the survey, and during that time a great deal of what is known as "tall" talk was indulged in by certain of the King Natives. Aotea has long been looked upon as one of the hotbeds of Kingism; and for any of the friendly Natives to even suggest such a thing as a survey of land in that locality, notwithstanding the probability that the land proposed to be surveyed was owned by them, was looked upon by the King party as a piece of presumption on their part, and the action of Government in proposing to grant such a survey was looked upon as a policy that should be opposed by every possible means that the King party could command. Letters were written, threats made, and speeches delivered *ad libitum*, denouncing the survey and the promoters of it. The surveyor was to be stopped and turned off; and so excited and taken up were the minds of the King party at Aotea regarding this survey that they forebore to take any steps to oppose the erection of the telegraph-poles across Aotea Harbour, which was then being done for the purpose of connecting Kawhia with other parts of the colony by telegraph, and which work was judiciously commenced before the survey of the Manuaitu Block. The Natives decided not to interfere with it, but to reserve their energies for the obstruction of the survey when it should take place. As, however, considerable delay took place before the survey commenced, there was plenty of time for the Natives to look at the matter in all its bearings; and they appear to have done so. Some of the most obstructive got tired of waiting, and their zeal languished through want of opportunity to exercise it; others began to doubt whether it was advisable to obstruct at all, but rather to let matters take their course; whilst some went over to the other side, and professed themselves in favour of a survey and investigation of title. I wrote several letters to different chiefs explaining the position to them, and advising them to reserve their energies for a fight of words in the Native Land Court. This, with the assistance of the causes above mentioned, resulted in the survey being tacitly agreed to, and when the surveyor went on to the ground to commence his work no one appeared to obstruct him, and he has been able to carry on his work to completion without being interfered with. The title to this land is likely to be investigated by the Court that will sit at Kihikihi in June next.

During the month of April the Native Minister visited this district, and had meetings with both the Ngatimaniapoto and Waikato Tribes, or, in other words, with those who are on good terms with and assist the Government, and those who oppose. The meeting with the former was held at Kopua, both Wahanui and Taonui being present. The principal speaker was Mr. John Ormsby, half-caste, and chairman of Kawhia Native Committee, to whom the tribe had intrusted the task of putting their views before the Minister. The meeting was a very satisfactory one. The Natives evinced a willingness to work under our laws, and to assist the Government in every way, even to putting the land known as the "King country" through the Court, by which means only can settlement be promoted; they, on their side, only making certain reasonable requests in connection with matters which they consider will conduce to their welfare and protection under the new order of events which is now taking place, the principal of which requests were the alteration of "The Native Committees Act, 1883," to make it more workable and more acceptable to them, and the appointment by Government of an officer to act in conjunction with one of the Natives, appointed by themselves, to assess the value of the land in excess of one chain width which has been taken for the North Island Trunk Railway line and for station-sites.

The meeting with the Waikato or King Natives was held at Whatiwhatihoe. Tawhiao was present, and was most affable and friendly; in fact, he always has been so at his meetings with Ministers, but this time there was something about his demeanour and that of his people that showed that he and they were more anxious as to the result of this meeting than they had been as to the result of any previous one. In fact, at this meeting they showed for the first time, through their speakers (Tawhiao and Major Te Wheoro), a desire to come to some arrangement with the Government. At previous meetings their demeanour has always been that of a people who, if they could not get what they wanted, were quite indifferent and perfectly satisfied with the existing state of affairs; and they only seemed to meet a Minister out of respect for his position, and for the purpose of hearing what he had to say and what proposals he had to make to them, never intending to accept any until the ones they wanted and were waiting for had been made to them. The march of events during the last four years has, however, greatly altered the position of affairs. Whilst they during that period have been gradually losing power, prestige, and support, the Government, on the other hand—thanks to the friendly attitude taken up by some of the tribes who formerly were the mainstays of the King party—have been able to take up a position entirely independent of them, and (with here and there a small exception) to carry on public works throughout the district without having, as was the case some years ago, to first consider whether it would be possible to carry out such works if they were likely to be opposed by Tawhiao and his advisers. The result of the meeting at Whatiwhatihoe was that a subsequent meeting between the Hon. Mr. Ballance and Tawhiao (who was accompanied by Major Te Wheoro) took place next day at Alexandra, when certain proposals were made by Mr. Ballance which seemed to be looked upon favourably by Tawhiao; and that meeting was the first at which Tawhiao has ever gone so far as to discuss with a Minister the settlement of the questions at issue between himself and the Government. It was plain all through the interview that Tawhiao had only the interest of his people at heart. There was an entire absence of the element of selfishness in all his conversation. He did not even allude to any personal benefit that he might obtain should he, on behalf