

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE MEETING, POUTU, TAUPO

(REPORT BY INSPECTOR SCANNELL, R.M.).

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

Inspector SCANNELL, R.M., Taupo, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Taupo, 23rd September, 1885.

I have the honour to forward for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister the accompanying report made by Sergeant Thompson, A.C., Clerk of the Resident Magistrate's Court, Taupo, of a Native meeting held at Poutu, Rotoaira, on the 7th instant and following days.

The meeting was convened by Topia Turoa and Hori Rohipa, two of the Natives who accompanied Tawhiao to England, and was notified to commence on the 26th August, but put off from day to day waiting the arrival of Tawhiao and other chiefs from Waikato. Tawhiao at last sent a message to say that he was unable to attend, owing to the death of Manuhiri.

You will see by the report the subjects which were discussed at the meeting and the opinions of the several speakers. About a thousand persons attended, chiefly from Tuhua, Upper Whanganui, Patea (Taupo), and portions of the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa Tribes bordering on Taupo.

With the exception of that part of the Ngatituwharetoa (Taupo) Tribe residing on the eastern and northern sides of the lake, all present agreed to adopt the resolutions put forward, and a document embodying these resolutions was signed at first by most of the chiefs as representatives of their hapus, but afterwards by all.

The proceedings were said by all Europeans who were present—and there were many—to have been conducted in the most orderly manner; but, with the exceptions I have named, all were unanimous in agreeing that all the tribes were to unite as one people; to acknowledge Tawhiao as king of all the Natives in New Zealand, acknowledging the Queen's authority, but not that of the Colonial Government; to withdraw the adjudication of their lands from the Native Land Court; to allow no surveys, sales, or leases of lands; to allow no spirits to be sold or stores for the sale of European goods to be kept within the boundaries of what they call the King country, and which corresponds to that part restricted by a recent *Gazette* notice from the operations of the Licensing Act; [This last was agreed to after Sergeant Thompson had left, thinking the meeting was finished.] to abstain from voting for Native members of the House of Representatives; that Native Committees should be appointed under Tawhiao's authority throughout the Island to manage their local affairs. It was also agreed, after Sergeant Thompson's departure, that no active obstruction should be offered to the construction of the railway, and that on no account should there be any fighting with the Europeans over it. In reference to the railway construction, it was also agreed that, although they were not to offer any active obstruction, they should do so passively, by declining to do any of the work and by charging exorbitant prices for any timber or other material which they might be required to sell; and to test at some future time the question as to whether the Government (Colonial) have not broken the provisions of the treaty of Waitangi.

These were the main heads of the resolutions agreed to, as far as I have been able to learn as yet; but, as at meetings of this kind many things are said and done privately among the chiefs in their whares of which Europeans can have no cognizance, I asked Rawiri Kahia and Hohepa Tamamutu, both influential chiefs and staunch Government supporters, to take notes and inform me of everything that transpired both in public and in private, and they promised to do so. They have not returned yet; and, if their report differs in any material point from the present, or contains any important addition, I will communicate further.

It may perhaps be premature to offer any opinion at present on the importance or otherwise of this meeting. It may pass over as so many other have done, or it may contain the germs of future trouble.

The two chiefs who were mainly instrumental in convening the meeting, Topia Turoa and Hori Ropiha, are able and influential men among the Natives, and they have a powerful engine at their command—that of fanaticism. Hori Ropiha is a prophet of the new religion, second only in power to Kere, the founder; and Kere was present, and in perfect sympathy with all that transpired.

The Natives have as firm belief in the powers of these so-called prophets as ever they had in the old Hauhau days in the prophets of that religion, and would as implicitly carry out anything