

had been their reliance on the justice and power of the Government, that they had ceased to reckon on their own strength, they had allowed their guns to rust, and possessed but a scanty store of powder and ball, while their opponents, who had always been hostile to British occupation, were well armed and munitioned, and their ultimate and least demand was, that they should be supplied with the means of opposing their enemies.

While your Memorialists admit that the critical position of the Settlement in 1854 demanded the utmost circumspection on the part of the Government, they are nevertheless of opinion that the enforcement of the law against Katatore and his followers would have been as wise and prudent as it would have been a just act.

The history of the past four years has shewn forcibly the lamentable results of a contrary policy. Relieved from all dread of the interference of Government, the wild passions of the Natives at once found vent. Three months after the murder of Rawiri, some of the relatives of Ihaia te Kiri Kumara executed summary justice on a Ngatiruanui native who had been guilty of adultery with Ihaia's wife, and this act was speedily followed by the invasion of Ihaia's land by 300 men of that tribe. Ihaia's Pa was stormed and taken after a stout resistance, and Ihaia and his surviving followers were only saved by a friendly diversion effected by the adherents of Rawiri. The Ngatiruanui, after their victory, visited Katatore, and remained in the vicinity of his Pa for some days, but, happily for the peace of the Settlement, they decided on returning to their homes by the way they had come, instead of marching through the town as they at one time contemplated. In the meantime, the feud between the friendly Natives and Katatore hourly gathered strength. Arama Karaka, the brother of Rawiri, arrived from the South, and assembled in the Ninia pa all the Natives in the vicinity who advocated the sale of land, while Katatore was joined by Wiremu Kingi, and subsequently by the Ngatiruanui. It was at this time that the danger of the Settlement became imminent, for the mass of the settlers were known to sympathise with the friendly Natives besieged in the Ninia Pa, and many of them were supplying the besieged with munitions of war. It was also at this time that, at the pressing instance of the settlers and the Provincial Government, a garrison was first stationed in Taranaki. By the arrival of the Ngatiruanui the friendly Natives besieged in the Ninia were reduced to severe straits, and Arama Karaka besought the aid of Ihaia, which was given on the condition that the latter should receive the land at Ikamoana as the reward of his services. Shortly after a battle took place between the Ngatiruanui on the one side, and the Ninia natives and Ihaia on the other, which terminated in the defeat and retirement of the former.

After the departure of the Ngatiruanui, the belligerents, exhausted by a long continuance of hostilities, were anxious to terminate the feud, and in a short time peace was apparently established, but the elements of discord still existed to burst forth again with renewed vigour. Ihaia held the land at Ikamoana (the price of his assistance to the Ninia people), but his claim was not assented to by Katatore: for the land in question was the common property of the tribe, and Katatore, himself a claimant, was at war with the majority when the cession was made. After the establishment of this hollow peace, Katatore, who for many years had maintained his influence by opposing the sale of land, suddenly changed his policy and became a most enthusiastic advocate on the other side. He at once took the foremost place in the consideration of the Government, while the men who had only remained consistent were thrust aside for the new man, and the negotiations for the purchase of land which ensued immediately on the establishment of peace, depended mainly on the influence of Katatore. Ihaia still held the land at Ikamoana. His position had not been considered in the peace made by the Puketapu family, and his war flag still flew from the Pa. Several of the Ninia people who had been adherents of Rawiri, and had fought side by side with Ihaia, now conceived the infamous project of destroying by the same blow, Katatore, who had slain their relatives, and Ihaia, who had rescued them from imminent danger. They induced Ihaia to join with them in a conspiracy for the assassination of Katatore, and after the perpetration of the deed rose in arms against him. Ihaia, betrayed by his associates, maintained himself in his Pa at Ikamoana for some time, but at length retreated to the home of his people at Waitara, where he was immediately besieged in the Karaka Pa by the followers of Katatore, by his associates in the murder, by Wiremu Kingi, and many of the Taranaki and Ngatiruanui tribes. The number of his opponents may be rudely estimated at 500 men, and the immediate supporters of Ihaia at about 100. Ihaia, in his hour of danger, besought the aid of his allies in Waikato and Upper Whanganui, and many bodies from those distant places have reached Waitara. Some of these people have merely endeavoured to effect a peace between the contending parties, in the interest of Ihaia, but Wiremu te Korowhiti, a Whanganui chief, is now involved in the feud by the death of a relative who was shot by Ihaia's opponents. Ihaia has been recommended by his allies from Whanganui and Waikato to secure himself by a retreat to either of those countries, but he has refused to abandon his land. Emissaries from Pototau have likewise assailed him with importunities, but he has refused to listen to them, and says he will still rely on the justice of the Government, and is supported by the sympathy of the settlers.

A short time since, when the position of Ihaia seemed desperate, and when his principal opponent, Wiremu Kingi, had evinced a determination to slaughter, without regard to sex or age, the inmates of the Karaka Pa, a memorial was addressed to His Excellency the Governor, praying him to rescue these unfortunate people. That memorial was responded to by the offer to remove Ihaia with his followers to the Chatham Islands, which was at once refused, for Ihaia could at any time have secured his safety by retreat to Waikato or Whanganui.