

Some of the principal causes which among the Taranakis have wrought such a great and sudden change in their former feeling have been explained to me by them, and I will briefly repeat them here.

During one of the recent visits in New Plymouth some of these Taranaki natives had been informed by some of the town natives that they had been given to understand from good authority there is every reason to believe almost to a certainty that, immediately after the arrival of the Government here, the women and children belonging to Arama Karaka and his party would be called into the town pa (Te Kawea) for safety, and that this having been done His Excellency will at once proceed to active measures against Katatore and Wiremu Kingi, and take such steps as will lead to the capture of those two notorious Chiefs either by open force in broad daylight or perhaps by stratagem in the night; and that in the event of such an undertaking as this being successfully accomplished, Katatore will most likely be subjected to the penalty of a murderer, i. e., capital punishment, whilst Wiremu Kingi is to be transported beyond the seas to a penal settlement for the remainder of his life. The next thing will be (continues the report) that the Waitara land will be taken by the Pakeha and be appropriated to themselves whilst the native owners will be cut off.

A report like the above, though taken entirely by itself, would hardly fail in obtaining a good deal of credit among a people so full of prejudice and naturally so susceptible of jealous fears as these Taranaki natives; still they say what has chiefly inclined them to look upon this report as being in all probability correct is the circumstance that, about the same time, they had been much and closely interrogated in New Plymouth by gentlemen of high standing with regard to the numerical strength of both the Taranaki tribe and the Ngatiruanui tribe respectively, and moreover they had been told that the soldiers were very wishful to fight against the Maories, only that it remained for the Governor to say whether they were to do so or not.

All these reports together created at first a considerable degree of sensation and excitement throughout this district, and letters were written and sent to Mr. H. Halse, to Tamati Te Ngahuru and others to enquire of them whether or not those reports were to be relied on, and whether the new Governor was likely to adopt such steps, in reference to the Puketapu disturbance and against the two Chiefs Katatore and Wiremu Kingi as seemed to be anticipated he would? Meanwhile conjecture and debate, had its course as all men agreed in opinion, &c. There was no difficulty in coming to some understanding in the matter without the slightest hesitation or any wish to conceal, they have explained to me what are their views on the subject, and also what plan they have resolved on adhering too, and to follow out according as circumstances shall direct them. There can be no doubt that they have correctly informed me on this point, since I have met with other evidence which most unquestionably corroborates and confirms it. In the first instance they state that they consider that the Government have no just ground for interfering at all in the Puketapu quarrels nor for taking any steps whatever against either of the two chiefs, Katatore and Wiremu Kingi, as it regards their life, liberty, or estate, or rights, &c.

In support of this argument they give the following reasons, first, because the dispute and disturbances have originated within and among that tribe, and have always been kept confined to the Maoris themselves, without interfering at all with the Pakeha and their rights and properties; secondly, because though Rawiri Waiaua was an officer of the British Government, but still for all that he was a Maori and a member of his own tribe, and that his position in the service of Government did not entitle him to alienate, at his own pleasure, lands which though owned by himself, were still in some degree property of the tribe, and could therefore only be disposed of by common consent of the latter; thirdly, because Katatore can no longer be proceeded against or punished for having killed Rawiri, as not only he has been left so long a time to be his own and at liberty, but he has also made payment according to the Governor's demands for Rawiri's death, by giving up to the Queen the land on which Rawiri died; fourthly, as to Wiremu Kingi, because he can be accused of no crime, he is on his own land, being the real and true chief of Waitara.

In the second instance they (the Taranakis) express their desire for the continued maintenance of peace, between the Europeans and Aborigines, however they add at the same time in a decided tone, that according to the view the Natives take of Government interference, that peace will at once be interrupted, so soon as an interference on the part of the Military be attempted.

In reference to these two last named points, these Taranaki Natives declare that the sentiments and professions as contained in Colonel Wynyard's letters have their entire approbation, in as far as it is their own (Taranaki) wish, that the Puketapu should be left to themselves with their own quarrels, and that the Military should simply remain what those letters stated—they had been sent to be, a protective force for the safety of the European settlement. As long as this policy should be adhered to, say they, mutual peace and goodwill will be upheld and continued between themselves (Taranaki) and the settlers and soldiers. But if the new Governor should set all Col. Wynyard's words and plans aside and contrary to it adopt any hostile or coercive steps, against either one or both of the two Chiefs, Katatore and Wiremu Kingi, as seemed to be had in contemplation by some Pakeha here—then the first step of such a kind on the part of the Governor would most certainly on the part of the Natives be viewed and received as being the signal and commencement of a general war, and of a life and death struggle, between the Pakeha and the Maori; because under present circumstances and as matters were standing at present, any such step against either Katatore or Wiremu Kingi, or both, would be generally viewed by the Aborigines as a "*pokanoa*" aggression, on the part of the soldiers upon the Maori race, and as a first step in a general expatriation movement on the Government (Pakeha) to dispossess the Natives by physical force of their inherited oil, which if once permitted by the latter to be successfully entered upon by the former Pakeha) would most certainly be proceeded with and be carried out through the whole length and