

P A P E R S

RELATIVE TO

THE RETURN TO TARANAKI OF WIREMU KINGI.

No. 1.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR EYRE TO HIS EXCELLENCY
SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

Government House, Wellington, 25th April, 1848.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report for the information of your Excellency, that a large majority of the Ngatiawa Natives emigrated from Waikanae on Monday, the 17th of April, on their route to Taranaki.

This intelligence was conveyed to me in a letter from the Resident Magistrate of Waikanae, from which I enclose an extract stating the number of canoes and boats and probable amount of ammunition which they took with them.

With respect to the latter, I may observe that I had previously been made aware that there was a probability of this ammunition being taken, and I had in consequence summoned my Executive Council, to consult with them as to the policy of adopting any measures for taking possession of, or at least preventing the exportation of so large a quantity of gunpowder.

The opinion of my Council, however—and I fully coincided with them in that opinion—was unanimously to the effect that as the Ngatiawas had always been looked upon as our allies, and were in some measure emigrating with the sanction of the Government, it would not be just to deprive them of the means of defence, and it certainly would not have been prudent to have made any attempt to do so forcibly without being prepared for the consequences of disaffection and distrust, not to say even rebellion, which would probably have resulted from the adoption of such a course. I therefore instructed the Resident Magistrate to take no other steps than to point out to the Natives in a friendly manner the danger of their keeping so large a quantity of powder in their own possession, and to suggest to them the advantage of placing it in the amicable custody of the Government. To this, however, they declined assenting, although there was no attempt made to deny or conceal the amount of ammunition in their possession. On the contrary, the Resident Magistrate was expressly taken to see it, by the principal Chief himself, William King.

In connection with the departure of the Ngatiawa Natives, and in reference to your Excellency's instructions to me, to endeavour to come to an understanding with them that upon reaching the Taranaki district they should consent to settle on the North side of the Waitara, instead of occupying both banks of that river, I have the honor to state, that prior to Mr. McLean's arrival, I had two or three interviews with William King, and endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to accomplish this object.

That Chief expressed strongly his desire to be on friendly terms with the Government, but at the same time stated that he would not bind his followers to any particular course, and would not decide anything until after his arrival at Taranaki.

Upon Mr. McLean's arrival, I sent that officer up to Waikanae to see W. King again on the same subject, and to point out strongly to him that unless he came to some understanding with the Government on the subject of his contemplated emigration, they would not in any way acknowledge or recognise his rights in, or his claims to a district from which he had been so many years absent. Upon returning to Wellington, Mr. McLean informed me that he thought William King had considerably altered his views, and that he now stated that he was disposed to use his influence to bring about the arrangement proposed by the Government, but that he was still anxious that nothing further should be done until he reached Taranaki, or, to use his own expression, that he should not be pressed too closely.

Finding therefore that nothing could be gained by urging the matter immediately, I have requested Mr. McLean to follow W. King to Taranaki, so as not to be in the way, to endeavour to effect the required arrangements when the Natives are actually on the ground.