

meet the other tribes in a friendly and conciliatory spirit. He also gave a short account of his interview with Ihakara, and assured the Ngatiapa of that chief's desire to meet them on fair and generous terms.

Aperahama Tipae, in reply, spoke with much bitterness of the Ngatiraukawa and their chiefs. He declared that the Ngatiapa would never consent to unite with the other tribes in the proposed sale, and that nothing therefore could be gained by their attending the meeting at Manawatu. He said that while the Ngatiapa were still in favor of selling, they would not consent to divide the purchase money with the Ngatiraukawa, or with the Rangitane, and that unless Dr. Featherston was prepared to close with the Ngatiapa, irrespective of the other claimants, he would consider the negotiations at an end, and would encourage his tribe to take up arms again in defence of their rights.

Governor Hunia made a still more violent speech against the other tribes, openly boasted that they (the Ngatiapas) had now plenty of arms and ammunition, and could easily drive off their opponents, and that they would now prefer an appeal to arms to any other course. He almost intimated that they had during the West Coast campaign reserved their ammunition for that purpose. This extreme violence was, however, distasteful to the meeting.

The speeches which followed partook of the same tone. All agreed that the determination not to attend the meeting was a good one, and that any arrangements for the purchase of the block from the Ngatiapa must be conducted independently of any negotiations with the other parties concerned.

Dr. Featherston rebuked Hunia, Aperahama Tipae, and others for the statements they had uttered; said they knew full well that their threats were of no avail with him; that he regarded them as mere Maori bounce; emphatically warned them against taking the law into their own hands; and, while acknowledging the services they had rendered, expressed a hope that the result of the recent campaign had been to establish a conviction in the minds of all Maoris, and especially of themselves, that the Queen's Government was both determined and able to enforce law and order. He expressed his disappointment that the tribes would not be brought face to face, as he had been induced to hope; offered at the same time to take any proposal or suggestion from the Ngatiapa to the Takapu meeting. His Honor stated, moreover, his willingness to take a separate deed of cession from the Ngatiapa, provided the other tribes would not object to such a course. This would, however, necessitate two separate payments, and it was important that he should know, before making any proposal of the kind to the Ngatiraukawa and Rangitane, what price the Ngatiapa were prepared to accept in final satisfaction of their claim to the block.

Hunia Te Hakeke stated that at a meeting which had taken place at Turakina a few weeks previously, they had offered the block to Mr. Buller for fifty thousand pounds (£50,000). It had then been their intention to make large reserves for their own use and occupation. They were now prepared to forego these reserves if Dr. Featherston would agree to pay them £90,000.

After a number of other speeches to the same effect, Tamati Puna, of Wanganui, proposed that £60,000 should be named as the price. To this, after some show of opposition, the meeting consented. Subsequently £50,000, and then £40,000 was named and agreed to.

Although the discussion lasted for several hours longer, nothing definite was arrived at, the whole of the Natives present declaring that they would not take a penny less than £40,000, and that the other tribes should not share the payment with them; that their great desire was to fight, and take the land by right of conquest. The meeting accordingly broke up about 4 p.m., without apparently any satisfactory result. But after Dr. Featherston's reply to the violent speeches of Aperahama Tipae, Kawana Runia, and others, the meeting refused almost unanimously to adopt a resolution indorsing their opinions.

On the 30th March, Dr. Featherston returned to the Lower Rangitikei, calling on his way down at Maramahoea, where he found Wi Pukapuka and a few of his people, the bulk of the Natives having already started for Te Takapu.

Dr. Featherston returned to Manawatu on Monday, the 1st April. On the evening of the same day His Honor had an interview with the following chiefs, viz., Ihakara Tukumarū, Noa Rauhihi, Hori Te Waharoa, Hoani Meihana, Rei Te Paehua, Horomona Toremi, Wi Pukapuka, and Tapa Te Whata. These were the representative chiefs who, in October, 1864, voluntarily met Dr. Featherston at the Wharangi, and on behalf of their respective tribes formally offered the Rangitikei Block to the Crown, in the hope of thus finally adjusting their quarrel with the Ngatiapa. The interview was a brief one, each chief made a short speech, declaring that he had remained true to his promise and was still determined to sell the land; while they all expressed regret that one of their number (Aperahama Te Huruhuru) had lately avowed himself an anti-seller. Dr. Featherston thanked the chiefs for the manner in which they had acted, assured them of his confidence, and expressed a hope that whatever course might be determined on, the tribe would be unanimous.

At the conclusion of this interview the chiefs returned to Te Takapu. At their earnest request Mr. Buller accompanied them, and pitching his tent in the immediate neighbourhood of the Native encampment, placed himself at once in communication with the Natives who had arrived on the ground.

Although Dr. Featherston had been requested by the Takapu chiefs not to attend the meeting before the 5th April, the Natives had been invited to assemble there on the 2nd, in order to gain time for a preliminary discussion. Ihakara and the principal sellers declined to enter upon any debate respecting Rangitikei until the meeting should be formally opened. The leading anti-sellers, on the other hand, availed themselves of the interval thus afforded to foment discontent among the people and to create a feeling adverse to the sale. As often happens on such occasions, those who were most zealous in opposing the sale and in proposing other modes of adjustment, were amongst those who had least claim to the land. This fact was so fully admitted by the opponents themselves, and was frequently adverted to in the speeches of the real claimants during the after proceedings, that the opponents very generally commenced their speeches by admitting that they had only a claim upon sufferance.

By the evening of the 4th all the Natives had arrived, and preparations were made for a formal opening of the meeting on the morrow.

On the morning of the 5th April there were about seven hundred Natives present, belonging chiefly to the Ngatiraukawa, Rangitane, Ngatitōia and Muaupoko tribes. There were members of the