

PAPERS RESPECTING LAND DISPUTES AT WAIMATE AND MANGONUI.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. FENTON to the Hon. J. C. RICHMOND.

(No. 626.)

SIR,—

Native Lands Court Office, Auckland, 23rd July, 1867.

I have the honor to transmit to you herewith the enclosed copies of two letters addressed to me by Mr. Judge Maning, dated respectively the 15th and 16th instant, and beg to state that although the Court had nothing to do with the matter or land in question, yet I send this information as it affords another proof of maintaining clause seventy-five of "The Native Lands Act, 1865."

I have, &c.,

F. D. FENTON,
Chief Judge.

Enclosure No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. MANING to Mr. FENTON.

MY DEAR SIR,—

15th July, 1867.

I hear, but am not yet sure it is true, that a lot of fellows are killed at Waimate: I only mention it for the purpose of remarking that the Native Lands Court has had nothing to do in the affair. It was, as far as I know from report, occasioned by a settler paying money to one of the parties on account of the land, and though he knew of the rights of the others, disregarding them. The claim would have been brought quietly before the Land Court but for this, and most probably settled quietly. Another affair is beginning at Ahipara, where the Natives are mustering in hundreds. The Surveyor had the conscience to write to me to ask my advice whether he should carry on the survey backed by force! Of course I wrote to him to say I believed he was mad to ask such a question. Take notice that the Native Lands Court is in no way implicated in these affairs.

P.S.—I am nearly dead.—F. E. M.

Yours truly,

F. E. MANING.

Enclosure No. 2.

Copy of Letter from Mr. MANING to Mr. FENTON.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Hokianga, 16th July, 1867.

I write to give you more full information about the dispute at the Ahuahu. Six fellows are killed and some three or four wounded. Reinforcements are coming in to both parties, and it is likely there will be more fighting, and on a larger scale.

My chief object is to enable you to assure the Government (if necessary) that the Native Lands Court has had nothing to do in the matter. The foundation of the affair is, I believe, an old Maori feud, aggravated I fear by the injudicious meddling of a Pakeha. The claim would have come before this Court, and indeed will be called on the 1st August. The claimant, Wiremu Katene, never, however, took steps to survey the land. The survey having been attempted by other parties, whom he is now resisting, but who never signified to me any intention of opposing the claim, though I have seen them all repeatedly; indeed, from what I hear, no serious dispute was likely to have arisen had it not been for untimely negotiation having been made about the land before it had been adjudicated upon, much more dangerous and worse disputed claims have been adjudicated upon, to the satisfaction of all parties. The Natives are now avowedly fighting on an old Maori feud, and the reinforcements on either side are formally sent for and coming on that account. The land itself is not very much bigger than would serve to bury the dead, and is of little or no account in the quarrel as it stands now. I shall be over at the Waimate before the first of next month, and shall then see what can be done if the claim is made, but it is likely before that time there will have been another battle or two, and more killed.

Besides this affair there is another beginning at Ahipara, on the West Coast. North of Hokianga the Natives are mustering in hundreds, and it is likely there will be fighting. The affair is a boundary question, but no application has ever been made; but at the bottom of all is a Maori feud also, and the great number of Natives on one side have merely gone, not about the land, but to, if possible get revenge for a Chief of great note who was unfairly murdered by the other tribe more than forty years ago. I have often told people, you amongst others, that the Ngapuhi cannot keep from fighting for more than a certain time. They have been perfectly explosive for the last two or three years, and I have had to use the greatest circumspection to manage amongst them so as not to give them an excuse for fighting by any action of the Court.

The original claimants won the fight; took the pa of the other party and held possession of their dead, and are still willing that their claim be decided by the Native Lands Court. The other party however, who are headed by two tottering old Maori warriors, who fear neither God nor Devil, are all for war, and as I have said, are calling for reinforcements, on account of old feuds which