

the whole proceedings of Colonel Greer and Mr. Rice at Tauranga as being otherwise than premature, and to say the least indiscreet, if not discreditable to the Colony at large. It might have been imagined, from the careful manner in which Mr. Baker and myself (who have both had some considerable experience in Native affairs) were excluded from any participation in the negotiations, or from any knowledge of the Commanding Officer's plans, that some skilled diplomatic agent of the Government had been employed to arrange the preliminaries of a peace, instead of a junior officer of the Native Department. Mr. Rice, willing, active, and persevering as he undoubtedly is, cannot from his brief acquaintance with the manners and customs of the Natives, and his imperfect knowledge of their language, be either a fit or reliable person to be intrusted with an undertaking in which the honor of the Colony is at stake. I would only draw attention to the following circumstances:—

1st. To the deceit practised on Tupaea's people in leading them to believe that if they did not surrender they would be attacked by soldiers stationed at Wairoa, it being without doubt that none were there at the time. Most likely Mr. Rice knew nothing of this assertion, but he would have the credit of it.

2nd. To the anonymous letter.

3rd. To Wi Patene's assertion that the Governor told him to make peace.

4th. To Te Amohau's assertion that they were *invited*, did not enter of themselves (invited, did not come of their own accord). I cannot conceal my opinion that it would be highly injudicious for His Excellency the Governor to comply with the desire expressed by Enoka and others that he should visit their district and confirm the peace; for, in despite of the well known sagacity and diplomatic skill which His Excellency invariably displays in his dealings with Natives, I fear that it will only increase and strengthen an idea which is gaining ground among them that peace is required by the Government on account of orders being expected for the withdrawal of a large portion of the troops from New Zealand.

With reference to the charge conveyed in Adjutant Covey's letter of the 26th instant, that contrary to the Commanding Officer's orders, and my own promise not to interfere with the Natives in this district (meaning Tauranga), I have visited and tampered with the enemy then in arms in the neighbourhood of his camp, I would remark,—

1st, That I have yet to be informed what right Colonel Greer had to order me to do anything. New Zealand is a British Colony, and the Natives are subjects of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This is not an enemy's country, and I am not aware that "martial law" has ever been proclaimed at Tauranga. In the event of a riot or rebellion in England or Ireland, the civil power would come and go as it pleased, and the military authorities would have to assist the Justices of the Peace in quelling the riot or rebellion. The military force would arrest, kill, or disperse the rioters or rebels, and would leave the high tribunals of the country to deal with the magistrate if he did anything contrary to law.

2nd, As to breaking my promise, I never gave any promises other than those underwritten:—

(1.) That I would not read the Proclamation No. 8 to the rebel Natives at Tauranga. I have kept this promise faithfully in every respect.

(2.) That I would not go to visit the Natives at Otumoetai. This I faithfully kept; I did not go with Mr. Rice to that place.

I never gave any other promise not to interfere. I said two or three times I did not wish to interfere with either Colonel Greer or Mr. Rice in the matter, and the only time I have interfered was at Mangatapu, when I endeavoured to contradict and neutralize a gross misrepresentation. I did this out of a sense of duty to the Governor and Government of this Colony. If Colonel Greer blames me for such an interference in behalf of the honor of my adopted country, I can only say I do not envy him the enjoyment of the difference of opinion.

With reference to the charge "of visiting and tampering with the enemy," I have clearly proved that I have only visited the friendly Native pas at Matapihi and Mangatapu. If this is a grave crime in me, an officer in the Civil Service, who had business there (about Taraia's people), how much blacker an offence it must be in the case of Major Colville and five other officers, under Colonel Greer's command, whom I saw, three at each of the above-mentioned pas, on that day. When Colonel Greer brings those six gentlemen to a Court-martial, or orders them under arrest for visiting and tampering with the enemy on that occasion, then I may be brought to believe that he was justified in ordering me under arrest. "Tampering" is rather a strong term, and I think that a reference to my antecedents in the service of the Government is quite a sufficient answer to Colonel Greer's accusation without my stating that I am incapable of tampering with any enemy of the Government.

With reference to the further charge of notifying my intention again to interfere with them (meaning the Natives of the Tauranga District), I never expressed any intention of interfering with the Tauranga Natives. My letter distinctly stated it was my intention to take the declarations and issue certificates immediately to all Natives belonging to my district (Waihou). Twenty-seven Natives* belonging to that district surrendered at Tauranga. They were not residing in Tauranga Hundred when Mr. Rice visited them, but in the Waihou District, and crossed the Wairoa to surrender. It may be contended that I had no right to transact business with these Natives when temporarily residing in the district of another Commissioner. I should, however, imagine it would be quite competent in me to ask the Natives of my own district to meet me anywhere, especially in the present disturbed state of the country, when an officer cannot always safely enter into all parts of his district. If I interfered with the Natives belonging to a district other than my own, then I might be liable to censure unless peculiar circumstances warranted the interposition as in the case at Mangatapu.

The view I have for many years past taken of my position as an officer of the Native Department is, that I am personally answerable to the Government for all proceedings connected with my own district. That all communications of importance from the Government concerning the Natives of any district should pass through the hands or be done with the knowledge of the officer in charge of the district.

* Ngaiterangi, 5; Ngare, 1; Pirirakau, 5; Ngatiwhiwhia, 10; Ngatitokotoko, 6. Total, 27.