

No. 236.

Mr. H. T. CLARKE, Civil Commissioner, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

Civil Commissioner's Office,

Tauranga, 12th February, 1870.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Government, that as soon as it was positively ascertained that Te Kooti and his followers had reached Patetere, *en route*, as was reported, for Tauranga, I received verbal instructions from the Hon. the Native Minister to proceed to Tauranga, and to take steps, in conjunction with the Officer Commanding the District, to make such arrangements for the defence of the settlement as the exigencies of the case might suggest.

I accordingly left Auckland in the steamer "Tauranga" on the 13th January, arriving at Tauranga on the following day. I found the place in a state of great excitement. On the previous day numbers of letters from different quarters had been received by Major Mair, R.M., warning him and the Europeans of the near approach of Te Kooti. Similar letters had been sent by the Pirirakau Hauhaus to the Ngaiterangi Chiefs. Great alarm was the consequence, and upon very good grounds. There was little doubt that if not Te Kooti himself, at least several of his emissaries were in the district.

Immediately on the receipt of the intelligence, Major Mair with a view to test the accuracy of the statements that had been made, sent a Maori policeman named Hakopa with a letter to a Native residing in one of the neighbouring Hauhau settlements, the occupants of which were known to be in Kereopa and Hakaraia's interests, ostensibly to tell him that there was a sum of money lying in the Resident Magistrate's Court ready to be paid him, but really to glean information of what was going on. This Maori policeman was met on the road by a party of armed Natives who had watched his approach; they requested him to return forthwith, intimating at the same time that it was well for him that he was not a Pakeha, as they would certainly have shot him. This party of Natives was led by Parikiriki and Ngahiakai, two Natives who were actively engaged in the murder of a military settler named Campbell, in 1867.

I held a meeting with the Ngaiterangi, who were clamorous for arms, and were evidently in a state of the greatest alarm.

I have steadily avoided, for prudential motives, on one pretext or another, arming the Ngaiterangi; but I felt that circumstances were now changed, and that unless it was desired to drive them for self-preservation to temporize with Te Kooti and his followers, it would be better to arm a limited number of the most trustworthy from each hapu, and, with the concurrence of the Commanding Officer, putting them in charge of one of the redoubts. Fifty of them, including their most influential chiefs, were engaged, and we by this means had a guarantee that good faith would be kept by the Ngaiterangi. And I see no cause to regret the course adopted: not only have they been most active in providing picquets, guards, and escorts, but they have cheerfully given their assistance to carry on public works. With the exception of one young man, who was lured away, while on leave, by some young Hauhau women, their behaviour has been most exemplary. I may remark here that it has been stated, in one of the Auckland periodicals, that two men ran away with their arms. This is wholly untrue; the young man above alluded to left his arms and all his ammunition in camp.

On the 16th the Hon. the Native Minister arrived, and was pleased to approve all that had been done.

On the 17th Mr. McLean had meetings with the Native Chiefs, at which they again urgently requested that arms might be supplied. Especially the Ngatikohu and Ngatihe represented that they were as much open to attack as we were in the town, and that the Government need not distrust them, inasmuch as their hands were already stained with the blood of the Hauhaus. Both these statements were strictly correct; and to prevent their wandering about amongst their cultivations for supplies, Mr. McLean authorized a certain number of them to be put on half-pay, provided they would vigilantly guard their position.

On the 18th a Native named Te Hori, one of the Pirirakau, brought intelligence that he had seen Te Kooti at a place called Okauia; that he had with him fifty horsemen, all well armed; that he had made close inquiry as to the different lines of road to Tauranga, and the disposition of the Ngaiterangi towards him and his cause. On the following morning another messenger came in, named Enoka, with a letter from Tana te Waharoa addressed to myself, giving information of a visit from Te Kooti, and asking that the Ngaiterangi might be allowed to go out and see him (Tana), for that Te Kooti had said he would not interfere with those who were friendly disposed towards himself. Letters had been sent to the different sections of the Ngaiterangi to the same effect.

Enoka Tokoahu, Hori Ngatai, Te Kuku, Ranapia Kahukoti, and others, most peremptorily refused to accept the invitation, on the ground that it was not a time to be exchanging visits; that Ngaiterangi had never originated any quarrel, but had always been dragged into them by other tribes, to their cost; that they were determined to keep aloof from the intrigues of other tribes, and to share the fate of the Pakeha. The messenger returned to Ohineroa with ill-disguised chagrin at his failure, and muttered in the hearing of some of the Ngaiterangi, that Ngatihaua would cut their connection with Ngaiterangi for ever, and would not meet them again unless at the muzzle of the gun.