

No. 121.

Major ROPATA to the Hon. the DEFENCE MINISTER.

To Mr. McLEAN,—

Opotiki, 26th July, 1870.

Salutations to you. We have arrived at this place, and have seen the Whakatohea.

I was glad to find that they had carried out the arrangement we made with them when we left last time, viz., that they should remain peaceably, which promise they have kept. I was especially pleased to find that they had fulfilled their promise to the Government. Both Ferris and myself saw their friendly disposition, and have not been disappointed with the result.

I have also seen the person I appointed, whose name is Te Riaki (half caste) to look after them. He is now engaged in carrying out the works set on foot for the benefit of the people generally.

I have also seen Te Hira Te Popo, and Uaaterangi. I have addressed these men in a friendly and conciliating spirit, and I was at the same time impressed with a good opinion of their bearing.

I enquired of these two, how it was that they and their tribe came in so quickly? They replied, "We were afraid of being attacked by the Government forces, who are now going through, and subduing the length and breadth of the land, and we also believed that it was owing to the suspension of the operations during the winter season that we have been saved, and that when the summer season came in again, we should run great risk of being taken and killed. Another reason that induced us to come in and surrender was that the lives of all the prisoners had been spared under your merciful treatment. Hence it was that this remnant of the Whakatohea has come in and surrendered. If it be true that yours is a mission of friendship to these tribes, then let your clemency be great towards them under the laws of the Queen, so that we may be spared. Our evil and stupid proceedings have ceased to be; we shall never return to them again. When we joined Te Kooti's rebellion we believed at the time that the salvation of the people was in that direction, but instead of that we have found it to be the reverse. We have nothing further to say to you on the occasion of this your appearance amongst us."

Having finished their address, I then got up to speak in reply. I said to them—"I approve of what you have said to me, and since you have now discovered the right way for promoting the well-being of the people, do so; follow it up. Be guided by the law which gives peace and quietness to all men; that is to say, by the Queen, our protector, who has given to us light in times of trouble. When the Christian faith was first brought to these islands, we were in a state of cannibalism, and then we, the whole of the people of this island became Christians, and, this being done, you then sought to establish a King for the Maori people. This was the commencement of your downfall. Now, then, listen you two: The dog that has been tamed by a particular person, he will not follow or be led by a stranger; no."

This finished my address in reply to theirs, and they showed the usual signs of acknowledgment for the kind treatment and safety that had been held out to them.

After this was over, I then enquired of them as to what led to their separating themselves from Te Kooti, and Te Kooti from them?

Paora te Uaaterangi and Hira Te Popo said, in reply—"The reason that led to our separation was this: Te Kooti had ceased to incite the Natives in his cause; he discovered that his own schemes and devices had failed and broken down, and that the Natives, his allies, were deserting him in all directions."

I then enquired of them as to what the particular error was on Te Kooti's side that induced them to separate from him?

Paora and Te Hira replied—"The chief causes was the frequent deaths amongst his followers, and the frequent desertion of the men. He (Te Kooti) had also stated, or led the people to believe, that his own God had the power of destroying his enemies, and we waited to see whether his God had the power of destroying the forces against him, but we found it to be all a false statement, and that instead of the Government forces falling into his hands, it was, on the other hand, we who suffered the loss, and then it was that we determined to separate from him, for we reasoned thus: if we stay with him we shall die; and if we go, we cannot fare worse: the risk is equal."

I said to him, "You appear only now to have discovered Te Kooti's error, while you must have heard long ago of our condemnation of his proceedings; *we*, who thus condemned him being now in the ascendancy, while *you*, who approved of his acts, now find yourselves bewildered and cast down."

I then enquired of them as to where Te Kooti really was at this time. They replied that he was at a place called "Te Wera," in the district of Waioeka, at the source of that stream, on the road that leads to Turanga. Te Hira said that he had heard that Te Kooti was preparing a plantation there. I then enquired what the strength of his force was. They said fifty, but they are without powder and caps, not very many guns; but even those, of what use are they without powder and caps? The whole fifty are not supplied with guns. They also stated that the Urewera had ceased to think with Te Kooti. The report that he had 150 men is false, and that there were 300 of the Urewera with him is a false statement. Where are those many people to come from? The report was got up for the purpose of intimidation, I said to them, "Will not the Urewera come out and surrender?" They replied, that if they hear that we are spared, and in safe hands, they will all come out. I then thought thus: the final destination of the prisoners now at Wellington will influence the movements of those people who are now wandering about in the bush. I say, then, let those people be brought down and set at liberty, so that the course to take with respect to those men who are guilty of heavy crimes may be soon made clear, for I know that some of these fellows are here. Ferris can bear testimony to the truth of these statements, because he was present and heard them spoken. I waited for some time to see if Rakuraku would come to Opotiki, so that I might talk with him as to the best means of inducing the Urewera to come out; but I conveyed my wishes on this head to Hori Kawakura, of the Ngatiawa. My address to him was as follows:—"Friend, Hori Kawakura, salutations to you. My request to you is this: that you should, under the sanction of the law, send a messenger to the Urewera, inviting them to come out and surrender, that we may be able to deal with Te Kooti in the proper way. Should they obey your summons, then I promise you that the Government will treat you in a frank and friendly