

Major Mair returned to Hamilton to expedite their movements; I remained, as Major Mair wished me personally to see the party set off and then return. I remained. The people became wearied of waiting for the pakehas, and turned their horses out into the paddock. It was night when the pakehas arrived. I thought to myself that the pakehas would find it difficult to travel the road by night, owing to the bad state it was in. On asking the Maoris what the road was like, they replied that only a small portion of it was bad; such being the case, they were instructed to proceed that night. These pakehas told me it was their intention to go on to Moerangi, and wished me to accompany them. I said I knew nothing of that proposal; all that had been definitely arranged was that they were to proceed to Te Au-o-Waikato, and that a search party would be selected to go to Moerangi after the people who were to watch the road had been stationed.

The sergeant had already received his instructions about their going thither.

The reason I had for remaining was, I was afraid lest the Maoris should hear that I was there, and lest they should lose no time in carrying the news, for the more effectual hiding of Winiata. Also, my friends and I had decided that I was to go on.

The party started.

I did not see any half-caste accompanying the party, nor did I have any conversation with one. I am convinced that I did not see any half-caste with the party who could have furnished such a report as that published in the newspaper, which states that that article slandering me was supplied by a half-caste. The person whom I suspect as being the author of the gross attack on me, in return for my endeavours to serve the Government, was a European in the search party who could speak a little Maori. He was a constable. It was one Bob Kelly who proposed that we should all go on to Moerangi. I told him not to allow the Maoris who accompanied him to go to any of the Maori settlements there to talk about the matter, lest the Maoris there should also talk about it, and the murderer himself hear of the measures that had been taken for his apprehension; and that if any of the Maoris who accompanied him did so, to dismiss them. The order prohibiting them to go to the Maori settlements that were near to the place they were watching had been given by Major Mair and myself. One of my followers told me that there was a half-caste who wished to join in the search. I replied to my man that Major Mair and I had already got as many as were required, and that he could not be taken on. This ended the matter.

Early next morning I returned to Hamilton, about which time one of my own people from Taupiri arrived. He was sent on to assist the pakehas who were watching the road at Hukanui. It had been arranged that all people travelling by night were to be arrested, so that they might be identified.

In the morning I returned to Alexandra, and there received a letter from one of my men, who had gone to search for Winiata at Moerangi, informing me that the residents of that place had said that Ngatihaua and the European constables who were going there were to keep away, and not to go there to point their firearms at them, for if they did so trouble would shortly arise; whereupon I wrote to Major Mair, suggesting we should write a letter to those Maoris telling them not to be alarmed, and to allow the constables to prosecute their search unmolested, and also to tell the European constables not to threaten the residents of the place with their firearms, lest trouble should arise. This is all that I did in the matter.

On my seeing the libellous article in the newspaper, I said that I would take the matter into the Supreme Court, on the following grounds, viz.,—Because I was therein accused of shielding Winiata, and of telling the Natives not to apprehend him, but to remain passive—thus putting me on a par with Winiata; and that it was owing to this action of mine that Winiata was not caught. If I had not been engaged on behalf of the Government, I should not have thought so much of the charge made. However, I do not wish to imply by this letter that my own welfare is the matter which I think most about. But this libellous charge is certainly very grievous.

At that time, who was it that either concealed him or let him go on his way? I had nothing to do with it. Had he been caught this time, perhaps I would not have received the credit of it, but they would have given themselves the credit of capturing Winiata.

Although I have been in the Government service for many years, and have been employed in similar cases, this is the first time that any such charge has been made against me. I have never yet seen my actions and intentions questioned in such a manner as has been done by this newspaper, from former days up to the present time.

I write this in explanation, lest you should unheedingly listen to those malicious and evil-disposed aspersions.

What I wish to do is to take the matter before the Supreme Court, and there to have it decided.—Sufficient.

Sir Donald McLean, Wellington.

From your friend,

WI TE WHEORO.

P.S.—I would like a copy of this letter sent back to me.

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