

1876.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE REPUTED MURDERER WINIATA.

(LETTER FROM MAJOR TE WHEORO RELATIVE TO.)

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, No. 50, 7th August, 1876.

"That there be laid before this House copies of all correspondence between Major Te Wheoro and the Government regarding the possibility of capturing the reputed murderer Winiata."—(*Sir G. Grey.*)

N.B.—This Return does not include telegraphic correspondence previously presented.

[TRANSLATION.]

Major Te WHEORO to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

FRIEND,—

Alexandra, 28th February, 1876.

Salutations. On seeing the gross attack made upon me in the *Waikato Times*, which is totally unfounded, I thought that I had better write to you.

I wish you to pay no attention to the statements published in the paper of the 24th of this month. It was stated that the information was supplied by a half-caste. The writer could not have been a half-caste, but it must have emanated from an evil-disposed and unprincipled European.

At the time this scurrilous attack appeared, my friends Captain Clare and Major Mair were there (at Hamilton). I remained here to gather information about Winiata.

All these people read the gross misstatements concocted by that paper. Major Mair came to me and spoke to me about Winiata, but did not mention the article referred to. His friend the European clergyman at Te Awamutu told the pakehas at Alexandra about the article; in the evening a European gave me the paper, which had arrived by the mail. By this time, Major Mair had returned to Te Awamutu. I wondered why my friend Major Mair had not informed me of that article, as he had already seen it before we met. Had it not been for the good-will of a stranger, who was no particular friend of mine, the threat contained in the article might have been carried out. You must read the article published in the newspaper. There was not one single word of truth in it. I will now enter into correct details.

On the receipt of your telegram, giving instructions to Major Mair and myself with reference to Winiata, I went to Te Awamutu to consult with Major Mair as to the best course to be pursued for Winiata's apprehension, because all the constables who had been told off to be on the look-out at Moerangi had returned. We proceeded to Hamilton. Whilst we were there, Major Mair, Major Clare, and I had a meeting, when I made the following proposition:—

I said, "That some persons should be sent to watch on the Moerangi and Piako roads, in the direction where he was supposed to come out to the Hauhau border." The Mangawara Stream, which joins the Waikato River at Taupiri, was to be watched every night, lest he should come down from Moerangi in a canoe; in the day time they were to conceal themselves, lest any one should see them and inform the murderer, or those who were harbouring him, and so prevent his going by that road.

The road between Moerangi and Hukanui should be watched, as also the road between Moerangi and Te Au-o-Waikato in like manner; all the roads which it was suspected he might take were to be watched.

After all these precautions had been taken, then search parties were to proceed to those parts where the murderer was supposed to be. Two of my people arrived from Te Kohekohe, and also two English constables. At daybreak they were sent to Taupiri to watch there.

Major Mair and I went to Tamahere, to talk the matter over with Te Raihi and Te Hakiriwhi, and to arrange with them for some of their people, who could be depended upon, to watch. We said to them, "Let the people whom you can trust proceed to Te Au-o-Waikato first, and on their arrival there the sergeant would select the persons to watch any particular part of the roads he might point out." These different lines of road were shown by the Maoris on a rough sketch. A road leading from Piako and Waitara to Moerangi was to be watched, and the road from Piako *via* Moerangi to Te Au-o-Waikato was also to be watched. After this was done, search parties were to proceed to those parts where Winiata was supposed to be, so that, on his being forced out on to these roads, those who were watching for him would catch him. After these plans had been laid before them, they were agreed to.

There were two Europeans and two Maoris sent that day; after they were gone, four Maoris were instructed to await the arrival of some more pakehas, whom Major Clare was to send from Hamilton. We waited from daylight until after dinner, but the Europeans never came.

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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