

No. 6.

HETA TE HAARA to the Hon. Mr. SHEEHAN.

[TRANSLATION.]

FRIEND,—

Ohaeawai, 12th September, 1879.

Greeting. I have received your telegram in reference to the quarrel between the Ngaitu and Ngatitautahi tribes.

Friend, when your telegram arrived, peace had been made; nevertheless, Ngapuhi are willing that the offence should be tried by law. Probably you have received a letter from Ngapuhi asking that the law should deal with it. My word to you is that it should be tried by law. Ended. From your loving friend.

The Hon. John Sheehan, Native Minister.

HETA TE HAARA.

No. 7.

Mr. S. VON STÜRMER to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 3rd October, 1879.

In compliance with instructions contained in your telegram of the 5th September, I have now the honor to report for the information of the Government that, on my arrival in Russell from Sydney on the 4th September, I was informed that, during my absence in Australia, a land quarrel had arisen between the Ngaitu, residing at Otaua, and the Ngaitewake, residing at Mataraua and Kaikohe, and that a fight had taken place in which several persons on both sides had been killed and wounded. I at once landed from the steamer, and, as soon as possible, proceeded to the settlement of the Ngaitewake at Mataraua, where I was informed I should meet Maihi Paraone Kawiti, Kerei Mangonui, and other leading chiefs, who had gone thither to act as mediators between the two parties. On approaching Mataraua I was met by several influential chiefs, who informed me that both parties had agreed to cease fighting, and had handed over the land (Mangamaru) to Maihi Paraone Kawiti and Kerei Mangonui, and that there was still a good deal of excitement over the matter. It would be better if I did not visit the Natives, as my presence might tend to reopen a discussion on the cause of the trouble, and lead to fresh complications. I therefore proceeded at once to Hokianga.

On making careful inquiries, I find that the Ngaitu, of whom Hoterene Wi Pou is the leading chief, had received large advances from Europeans for the purchase of land situated between Otaua and Mataraua, and in which the Ngaitewake claim to have a large interest. Early in August certain members of the latter tribe had written to Mr. Williams, Resident Magistrate, asking him to caution surveyors not to come on the disputed land, which that gentleman at once did, and so matters remained until the 1st September, when Wi Pou and Kanere, with an armed party of sixteen men belonging to Ngaitu, proceeded to Mangamaru and commenced cutting a line. About midday, whilst preparing food, a party of the Ngaitewake of nineteen men, under the leadership of Taniora and Te Whata Patumauku, came suddenly upon them, and one of them shouted, "Stop work, or you are all dead men." In another instant one of the party shouted, "Puhia, puhia!" and a volley was fired, Ngawaka, of Ngaitu, being wounded. Ngaitu then rushed to their arms, which had been piled a short distance from the party, and a sharp conflict took place, in which Paraha Hare and Te Akatiti, on the side of Ngaitu, were killed, and Ngawaka and Hoani Tuoro wounded. On the side of Ngaitewake, Paora Anaru and Hiri were killed, and Te Kohe wounded. Both parties then ran away, leaving the dead and wounded on the ground, where they remained for twenty-four hours.

As soon as the fact became known, Maihi Paraone Kawiti, Kerei Mangonui, Hone Mohi Tawhai, and other chiefs, proceeded to mediate between the two parties, and on the 4th September the trouble was finally settled by both sides consenting to hand over the disputed ground to Maihi Paraone Kawiti and Kerei Mangonui, on the understanding that no further action should be taken by the Government in the matter. This being agreed to, they returned to their respective kaingas, considering the affair finally settled.

I have since informed some of the ringleaders that I considered it highly probable that the Government would take proceedings against them for this serious breach of the peace, and have endeavoured to ascertain the feelings of disinterested chiefs on the same subject. In each case I am advised not to push the matter at present; and that, as no European was in any way offended or injured, there is not much harm done, as each of the parties engaged lost an equal number of men, and they seem to think that any attempt at a forcible arrest of the parties might lead to serious trouble.

I may mention that during the last four years I have three times prevented the same people from coming to blows, and that I do not believe this land is the sole cause of the quarrel, but that it is the outcome of an old tribal grudge of very many years' standing.

I may mention that Sergeant Donovan and Constable Coughlan, of the Armed Constabulary Force, were at the scene of the conflict, and identified the bodies.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
SPENCER VON STÜRMER,
Resident Magistrate.